

Fighting erupts in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies) — Fighting broke out Wednesday between troops loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and forces of his rival General Abdul Rashid Dostam in western Afghanistan, a military spokesman said.

"This morning we started our cleanup operations against the enemy who have occupied Morghab," said General Azimi.

Morghab is a district centre in Badkhis province, which together with neighbouring Ghormach centre, was taken over by General Dostam's forces three days ago.

Military forces of Mr. Rabbani's ally, Ismael Khan, who is also governor of western Herat province, control most of the surrounding provinces of Badkhis, Ghor, Farah and Nimroz.

"Morghab and Ghormach had been demilitarised for the past three months in an agreement reached by the elders of these districts," Gen. Azimi, military spokesman for Ismael Khan told AFP.

He claimed the Uzbek occupation, led by Gen. Dostam's right-hand man, General Rasool Pahlawan, was in violation of this agreement.

"Currently they hold the town and positions east of Morghab River and our forces are west of the river," Gen. Azimi said.

He said no concurrent jet

attacks by Gen. Dostam had been made on Herat city.

Gen. Dostam and Mr. Ismael Khan had agreed not to bomb their respective capitals Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat under an arrangement reached through the intermediary offices of the United Nations in July 1994, he said.

Observers said the alleged Uzbek incursion into Badkhis province comes at a time when Gen. Dostam was being hard-pressed further east by troops loyal to Mr. Rabbani's main commander, Ahmad Shah Masood.

Fighting between Mr. Masood's men and Gen. Dostam's forces continues in central Bamian province near the district centre of Yakaulang, which is some 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of the once-famous tourist attraction of the coloured Band-i-Amir Lakes.

The capture of Yakaulang is strategically important for Mr. Masood as it would not only open up an overland corridor for the first time linking his forces with those of Ismael Khan, but also allow easier military supply to his men fighting in the mountains of the Dostam-controlled provinces of Jawzjan, Samangan, Balkh and Baghlan.

The southwestern frontlines of the forces loyal to Ismael Khan and the attacking Taliban religious movement were quiet at present,

according to Gen. Azimi.

On the main national highway linking Herat with the Taliban-controlled provincial capital Kandahar in the east, the frontline was still located at the district centre of Delaram in Nimroz province.

"Delaram is a sort of no-man's land," Gen. Azimi said adding that Ismael Khan had no immediate plans to try to take Delaram and push into neighbouring Helmand province.

Meanwhile, a record number of Afghans are returning home in one of the biggest refugee repatriations ever recorded, the U.N. refugee agency said Tuesday.

Up to 2,300 people are returning daily to Afghanistan, mostly from the neighbouring country of Iran, said Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

As of Monday, 50,000 refugees had returned to the war-torn country under a six-month-old UNHCR programme. An estimated 500,000, mostly from Iran and Pakistan, have gone home under the agency's repatriation programme begun in December 1992.

An estimated 8 million Afghans fled to escape 16 years of turmoil in their country.

The number of returning refugees has picked up largely because fighting has died down in the Afghan capital of

Kabul, Colville said.

"Also, it is the traditional return time of year. People wait until the end of the school year, some have seasonal harvesting jobs and just have gotten paid," he said.

By returning now, refugees have several months to build a house, plant a crop and harvest it before winter.

Mr. Colville recently returned from Afghanistan, where he surveyed the refugee situation.

Iran also prompted large-scale refugee returns when it announced in May the cancellation of temporary residence permits of certain refugees, which forced them to leave the country in 15 days. An estimated 1.5 million Afghans remain in Iran, and at least another 1 million in nearby Pakistan.

Economic conditions in Iran have meant cuts in government subsidies for schooling and health, and refugees "are conscious they are not as welcome in Iran as they used to be," Mr. Colville noted.

Some 1.8 million Afghans have returned from Pakistan since 1990, UNHCR said.

In addition to assisting refugee returns, UNHCR is trying to help Afghanistan build up its infrastructure, including railways and roads, Mr. Colville said. This is to encourage people coming over the border into Herat province to continue back to their home towns or farms.



MURDERED IMAM BURIED: Some 300 people attended the funeral of Algerian Imam Abdul Baki Sahraoui, 85, one of the co-founders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) who was murdered a week ago in his

Paris mosque, at the Bouzareah Cemetery in the capital Algiers. Sahraoui is the first FIS official killed abroad (AFP photo)

Turkey seals off border without Iraqi Kurd allies

ANKARA (AFP) — Equipped with sophisticated thermal-imaging cameras and heavy mountain weapons, the Turkish military is sealing off its southern border to deter Kurdish infiltrators, no longer helped by Kurds of northern Iraq.

Ankara had relied partly on the Kurds of northern Iraq, who unlike their brethren in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have no territorial claims on Turkey, but infighting between rival groups led the arrangement to collapse.

"In the beginning the Iraqi Kurds said they would take on the duty," of helping protect the border, said Yalim Erarp, foreign affairs advisor to Prime Minister Tansu Ciller.

"But then they started fighting and have not been able to stick to their word," he told AFP.

"It is the duty of the state to make the border as impenetrable as possible, with modern gadgets, monitoring, more vigilance."

Ankara is spending some \$6.6 billion to update its weaponry, according to the

daily independent Milliyet newspaper.

Half of that amount goes to battle PKK militants, who have been fighting since 1984 for an independent state in southeastern Turkey. Some 20,000 people have been killed so far, including soldiers, militants and civilians, official Turkish figures say.

On July 5 Turkey raided northern Iraq, declared a protected zone out of Baghdad's control four years ago. That operation followed a more massive one four months ago when 35,000 troops swept in to flush out PKK militants.

Recently, the army proudly showed local reporters its new tanks equipped with thermal-imaging cameras and night-vision binoculars deployed along the border.

And, transported by helicopters, troops with heavy mortars established bases for the first time on rugged mountain peaks across from known PKK shelters.

"Where we detect a PKK concentration on the opposite side (Iraq), we go and hit them there," Brigadier General Osman Pamukoglu,

commander of the last raid, told the daily English-language Turkish Daily News.

The two main Kurdish groups in northern Iraq now admit they are too busy fighting one another to keep an eye on their border with Turkey.

"We have been involved in our internal conflict," said Safet Dizal, representative of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the group controlling the northern Iraqi region bordering Turkey along 350 kilometres (219 miles).

"I cannot deny that we have moved many of our troops to the inside," closer to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), its rival group which holds the eastern half of the region.

Until May 1994, the two groups ran a united government in northern Iraq. At the time, they also patrolled the front, backed by ammunition and food from the Turkish army.

But, deep-seated rivalries resurfaced between Jalal Talabani's PUK and Massoud Barzani's KDP, sending them

into sporadic battles that slowed down after a ceasefire last April.

Mr. Dizal said even then the KDP guarded the border to a certain degree "until heavy fighting erupted again in early July, about a week before the ceasefire was due to expire July 15."

He is asking Turkey to help set up a populated buffer zone, but Ankara fears this might only create new shelter for the PKK.

Meanwhile, a minibus hit a mine believed to have been planted by Kurdish guerrillas, killing six civilians, the Bilis governor's office said.

Soldiers clashed with Kurdish rebels near the site after the explosion and killed four guerrillas, it added.

Three children, aged 8 to 10, were killed in Sirsiran village in this province Tuesday when a grenade they found in a field, exploded in their hands, the Anatolia News Agency said.

Two more Kurdish rebels were killed in clashes in Hakkari and Batman provinces Tuesday, according to the statement.

2 die, 109 hurt in Israel rock concert stampede

ARAD, Israel (AFP) — A 17-year-old boy and a young girl were trampled to death and 109 people hurt in a stampede at a rock festival late Tuesday in southern Israel, police said Wednesday.

Three teenagers girls were critically ill in a coma and six other people were kept in hospital, but were out of danger, doctors said.

The stampede started as panic swept the head of the crowd with thousands pressing to get into the open-air venue at the Negev Desert city of Arad to see the popular Israeli rock group, Machinists.

"The pressure of the crowd forced me to the ground and I was trampled on, I couldn't even see the legs," said

Maya, a girl who escaped with a few bad bruises.

"It was real hysteria, people were afraid they were going to suffocate with death and were pushing like mad to get out," said Daniel from Tel Aviv.

"It reminded me of the atmosphere after a terror attack in Gaza," said 20-year-old soldier Chaim.

None of the three gave their family names. Police said 18,000 tickets had been sold but that several thousand more fans turned up without tickets for what is known locally as the "Israeli Woodstock."

Police launched an inquiry, but said there appeared to have been too few guards on duty and that they were overwhelmed by the first wave of

panic.

According to Arad Mayor Betzael Tabib: "All necessary security measures were taken."

He said the organisers had refused to sell more than the 18,000 limit on tickets. The mayor ordered the closure of the venue, called Rock Place, but said the week-long festival — for which as many as 50,000 youngsters flocked to Arad — would go on as planned at several other sites.

Israel's telephone company Bezeq set up a battery of free telephones in Arad for fans to call home and the Egged bus firm was laying on dozens of vehicles for those who wished to leave.

News of the incident dominated the airwaves

Wednesday, pushing aside such items as Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and the aftermath of an apparent guerrilla attack Tuesday and two army training accidents.

Radio stations ran lists of names of teenagers whose parents had not heard from them, and appealed to everyone attending the Arad Rock Festival to call home.

"I am shaken to the depths of my soul," said Ilana, a mother of a teenage girl attending the concert. "It was a rough night," she said after hearing that her daughter was safe.

Some politicians criticised the decision by festival officials to continue the event as scheduled until the end of the week.

Paper: U.K. government cleared Iran 'military' sale

LONDON (AFP) — The British government approved the sale to Iran of equipment used in the manufacture of explosives despite being told of their probable military use, the Guardian newspaper reported Wednesday.

The exporter of the equipment said it was supplied in 1990 when Iran was covered by a British embargo preventing exports of products which could be used for military purposes in breach of the

Iran-Iraq ceasefire, according to the daily.

Greg Thompson, then owner of a specialist electronics company, wrote to then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's office in February 1989 to seek advice on the "legality of supplying Iran with components that I feel are specifically for military use," the paper said.

The components in question were peillor sensors, which can be used for labora-

tory research on explosives measuring, but which can also be used in the development of poisonous gases such as hydrogen cyanide, the Guardian reported.

Mr. Thompson believes their probable use in Iran was to measure the power and efficiency of an explosion to gather data for military use, according to the paper.

He also said in his letter to the prime minister's office

that he believed the components were not intended for laboratory use.

The paper said that a month after writing to Downing Street, Mr. Thompson received a letter from Alan Clark, then minister for trade, telling him there was "no reason to believe" the sensors would be used for military purposes and that an export licence was not necessary.

Daliberti plans to avoid Iraq border in future

WASHINGTON (R) — David Daliberti, one of the two Americans freed after spending four months in an Iraqi jail, returned to the United States Tuesday and jokingly promised never to go near the Iraqi border again.

"It's good to be home. It's good to see my wife... I feel fantastic," Mr. Daliberti said as he arrived at Dulles International Airport, accompanied by Representative Bill Richardson. The New Mexico Democrat helped win freedom for Mr. Daliberti and another American, William Barloon, this week.

Hugging his wife Kathy close by, Mr. Daliberti told her: "Come here, you're standing too far away."

"I'm just glad to have him back," his wife replied. After meeting reporters briefly after his late-afternoon arrival, Mr. Daliberti went to the White House for a 35-minute meeting with President Bill Clinton.

He said he thanked the president for U.S. efforts to get him released, but stopped short of giving Mr. Clinton any advice on policy toward

Iraq.

"That's not my field," Mr. Daliberti told reporters after the meeting. "I don't want to even think about Saddam Hussein."

He said Mr. Clinton had inquired about how he was treated in Iraq, the conditions in prison there and his medical condition. Mr. Daliberti said he felt great now but that conditions in the prison were poor.

Asked what his future holds, Mr. Daliberti said: "I have no idea."

Mr. Barloon, speaking on

CNN's Larry King Show, said later he planned to continue working as a field service engineer for McDonnell Douglas in Kuwait. "That's my intention," he said in a telephone interview from Kuwait. "This is where my job is."

Mr. Daliberti, 41, of Jacksonville, Florida, and Barloon, 39, of New Hampton, Iowa, were arrested inside Iraq on March 13 while on what they described as a trip to visit friends among U.N. military observers inside the border's demilitarised zone.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

<p>JORDAN TELEVISION Tel: 77311-19</p> <p>PROGRAMME TWO 13:30 Iris-the Happy Professor 14:00 Noddy 14:00 Fireman Sam 14:15 My Secret Identity 14:30 NBA 15:00 Pirates Island 15:30 Take Your Pick 16:00 I Witness Video 17:00 French Programme 19:00 News in French 19:30 News Headlines 19:35 National Geographic 20:30 The Album Show 21:15 Murder She Wrote 22:00 News in English 22:25 Feature film: "The Magic Bubble" 22:59 Shogun</p> <p>PRAYER TIMES 05:47 Fair 05:58 (Sunrise) Doha 12:42 Dhur 16:23 'Asr 19:46 Maghrib 21:17 'Isha</p> <p>CHURCHES St. Mary of Nazareth Church (Swkalla), Tel. 810740 Assembly of God Church, Tel. 633785 St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590 Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440</p> <p>De la Salle Church Tel. 661757 Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366 Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541 Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543 Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331 Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 Armenian International Church Tel. 625226 Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932 Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295</p> <p>WEATHER Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Normal summer weather conditions will prevail with temperatures around average and winds north-westerly moderate. On Friday, temperatures are expected to rise slightly. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.</p> <p>Min./Max. temp. Amman 20/32 Aqaba 25/39 Desert 17/36 Jordan Valley 24/38</p>	<p>Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31 Aqaba 37 Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 26 per cent.</p> <p>USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY AMMAN: Dr. Ali Tarif 794710 Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 854440 Dr. Ramzi Mazari 894788 Dr. Khalil Ithali 740740 Firas pharmacy 661912 Ferdous pharmacy 778336 Al Asana pharmacy 637025 Najrah pharmacy 623672 Al Salam pharmacy 636730 Yaacob pharmacy 644945 Shameeni pharmacy 637660 Najrah pharmacy 623672 Najrah pharmacy 847632</p> <p>IBRD: Dr. Ali Al Shogairi 246140 Al Quds pharmacy (—)</p> <p>ZARQA: Dr. Raich Sayer 901290 Khalifeh pharmacy 985417</p> <p>EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre 637111 Civil Defence Department 661111 Civil Defence Emergency 630341 Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777 Fire Brigade 617101 Blood Bank 773121 Highway Police 843402 Traffic Police 906200 Public Security Department 630321 Hotel Complaints 605800 Price Complaints 661176 Water and Sewerage 897467 Complaints 787111 Amman Municipality 661912 Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121 Overseas Calls 010230 Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101 Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101 Jordan Television 773111 Radio Jordan 774111 Water Authority 680100 Jordan Electricity Authority 815415 Electric Power Company 636381 RJ Flight Information 08-53200 Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200</p> <p>HOSPITALS AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32 Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 6442816 Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2 Jabal Amman Maternity 642362 Mahbas, J. Amman 636140 Palestine, Shmeisani 661714 Shmeisani Hospital 669131 University Hospital 845843 Al-Musader Hospital 667227/9 The Islamic, Abdali 6612737 Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646 Italian, Al-Mahajreen 7771013 Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126 Army, Shmeisani 89161115 Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50 Amal Hospital 607155 The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 845199</p> <p>ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)963323 Zarqa National Hospital (09)963323 Ibn Sina Hospital (09)963323 Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)96990 IBRD: Princess Basma Hospital (02)727555 Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727555 Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)727555 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111</p>	<p>Yemeni envoy gives Sudan a message KHARTOUM (R) — A Yemeni envoy has given Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir a message from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the official Sudanese News Agency (SUNA) said Wednesday. Mr. Saleh visited Egypt last week but denied his country would be mediating in the dispute between Egypt and Sudan over allegations that Sudan tried to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last month. Egypt has already rejected all mediation offers while Sudan says it is trying all channels to improve relations. The Yemeni envoy, delivered by special presidential envoy Abdul Salam Al-Ansi Tuesday, dealt with bilateral relations and developments in the Arab World. SUNA said, Lieutenant-General Bashir commended Yemeni attempts to settle inter-Arab differences, it added. Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha returned to Khartoum Tuesday from a tour of five Gulf countries and told state television Sudan was trying to end the crisis with Egypt through consultations with Arab states.</p> <p>Somalis make peace traditional way MOGADISHU (R) — Clan Elders in central Somalia have reached a peace agreement at least 20 people were killed in violence between ethnic militias last weekend, residents contacted by radio said Wednesday. A traditional "peace feast" will be held in the central town of Baidoa and other spots where clashes took place for three days last week between the Laysan on the one hand and the allied Haren and Eley clans on the other, Elders said. The fighting, in which about 45 people were wounded in Baidoa, forced aid workers from the United Nations and other relief agencies to stop work. They were able to</p> <p>Kuwait, S. Arabia hold border talks RIYADH (AFP) — Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has left Saudi Arabia after talks about delineating the border between the two countries. The Saudi Press Agency said Wednesday that Sheikh Sabah had left late Tuesday following a short visit. It gave no details about the talks but Kuwaiti diplomats said they focused on drawing up the borders. Sheikh Sabah held talks with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan bin Abdul Azz and Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal, the official Kuwaiti News Agency said. The Kuwaiti foreign minister said Sunday that Riyadh and Kuwait City intended to demarcate their border following a dispute over which side has the right to the Qarab and Umm El-Maradim islands in the Gulf. The land border was settled in 1965 after the two sides agreed to share a neutral zone created in 1922.</p> <p>Camel escape bid in Cairo fails CAIRO (R) — A camel ran amok in central Cairo, running over a flyover and through the most crowded part of the city before police killed it after a one-hour chase. The camel escaped Tuesday as its owner, a butcher, was taking it to the abattoir to be slaughtered, the newspaper Al-Akhar said Wednesday. It terrified pedestrians and drivers trapped on the flyover but the newspaper did not report any injuries. Police killed it about three kilometres from where it escaped.</p>	<p>21:00 Rome (RJ) 06:30 Lamaca (RJ)</p> <p>Other Flights (Terminal 2) 13:00 Doha (Q7) 13:40 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF) 14:00 Riyadh (SV) 17:00 Rome (AZ) 20:30 Cairo (MS) 21:00 Doha (EK) 21:10 Beirut (ME) 23:20 Istanbul (TK) 06:50 London (KL) 01:10 Amsterdam (KL)</p> <p>DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) 06:45 Beirut (RJ) 11:45 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ) 12:00 London (RJ) 12:40 Toronto, Montreal (RJ) 12:50 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ) 13:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ) 13:00 Paris (RJ) 13:15 Athens (RJ) 13:15 London (RJ) 13:15 Cairo (RJ) 20:30 Lamaca (RJ) 21:30 Jeddah (RJ) 21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ) 22:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ) 22:45 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)</p> <p>ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) 05:25 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ) 05:30 Aden (RJ) 08:30 Sanas (RJ) 08:50 Obabran (add) (RJ) 09:45 New Delhi (RJ) 10:15 Riyadh (RJ) 10:30 Beirut (RJ) 10:45 Muscat, Dubai (RJ) 11:00 Colombo (RJ) 17:35 London (RJ) 18:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 18:30 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ) 19:15 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ) 19:35 Athens (RJ) 19:40 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ) 20:00 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)</p> <p>MARKET PRICES Upper/lower price in fils per kg. Apple 700/500 Banana (Mukammur) 620 Cabbage 120/80 Carrot 350/250 Cauliflower 140/90 Cucumbers (large) 230/150 Cucumbers (small) 170/100 Eggplant 350/250 Garlic 700/500 Grapes 600/400 Lemon 140/90 Marrow (large) 230/140 Marrow (small) 230/140 Milk 120/80 Onion (dry) 780/600 Orange 330/220 Peas 300/200 Pepper (hot) 640/400 Pepper (sweet) 220/150 Potato 160/100 Pistachio 330/220 Soybean 300/200 Sweet Melon 240/180 Tomato 100/50 Water Melon 100/50</p>
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Jordan remembers King Abdullah

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanians today remember the late King Abdullah, founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and grandfather of His Majesty King Hussein, on the 44th anniversary of his death in Jerusalem.

King Abdullah was assassinated while attending Friday prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque in 1951.

The late king is remembered for his national stand and for laying the foundations of unity between the west and east banks of Jordan and for his commitment to defending the sanctity of the holy shrines of Jerusalem.

One of the eve of the anniversary, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Palestinian historian Nassereddin Nashashibi as saying that, throughout his life, King Abdullah led the Arab nation through difficult



challenges imposed on them by hostile powers.

Mr. Nashashibi said that King Abdullah had remained committed to national causes throughout his life and until his death in

Jerusalem in 1951.

To mark the anniversary, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker will open a seminar today on the life of King Abdullah and his role in building the nation.

Court orders tree-logging after neighbour's complaint

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Eight men, armed with two electric saws, entered the home of Sameh Kamhawi on July 15, and in spite of appeals from the home owners, they cut down 53 poplar trees in less than an hour.

The men were not out to vandalise, but were acting on court orders to cut down the trees following complaints from neighbours that the trees were becoming a nuisance.

The story began in September 1991, when a neighbour of Mr. Kamhawi complained to the Ministry of Agriculture that the eight-metre trees were blocking the breeze coming from the west side of his home and that the leaves were falling in his courtyard.

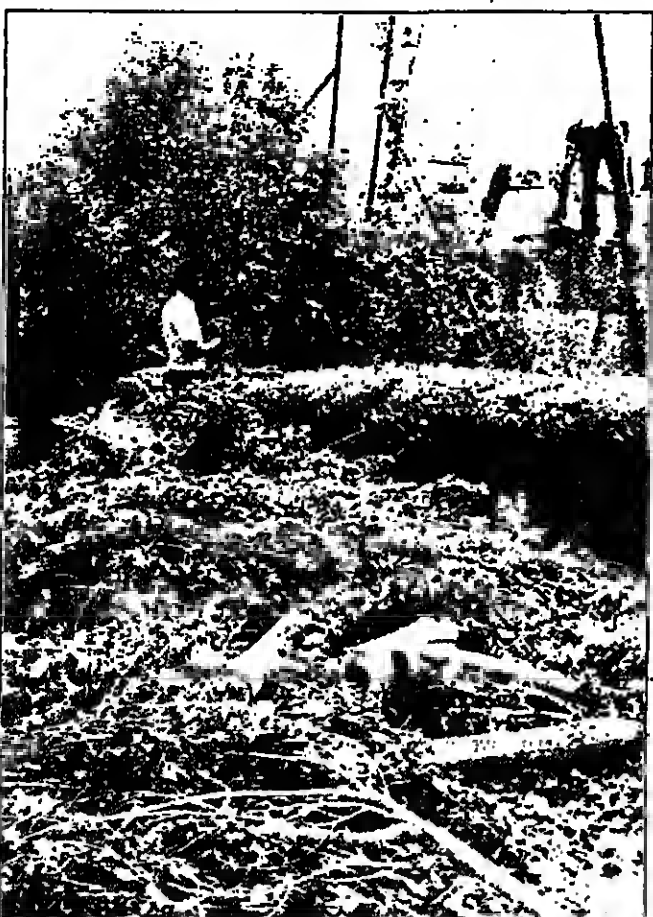
"I was very upset and I do not feel that there was any justification by the court to cut down my 10-year-old trees simply because my neighbour was disturbed by the leaves," said Roushan Kamhawi, wife of Mr. Kamhawi who lost the case in court.

According to Mrs. Kamhawi, the family offered to clean the neighbour's courtyard on a daily basis, but the neighbours refused the offer.

"The leaves and the sap from the tree constantly pollute our courtyard and we cannot guarantee that someone will come and clean it up," the neighbour told the Jordan Times.

The neighbour cited a previous example where they asked their neighbours to trim the trees to allow in an air passage but the Kamhawis had refused.

Mrs. Kamhawi's argument was that privacy was the issue there, since the trees screened off the family



Ministry of Agriculture employees last week cut down poplar trees at the home of Sameh Kamhawi (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

swimming pool.

"Now I will have to build an iron fence and plant new trees to maintain my family's privacy," she said.

But plans to do that were similarly rejected by their neighbours, who clashed with the workers who came to measure the fence.

"If they build a new fence or plant new trees we will file another law suit because it will block our view and the air passage," the neighbour said.

The verdict against the Kamhawis was made "in accordance with the law and since damage (to the plaintiff) has been proven," a court document said.

The court first fined the

Kamhawis JD 70. But, when the sentence was passed, the judge ruled that they had to pay JD 700 to pay for the cost of cutting down the trees, for the neighbour's legal expenses.

As the chopped up trees lie on the main street, the Kamhawi family faces additional expenses of more than JD 2,000 should they choose to plant new trees and at least JD 5,000 to build a surrounding fence.

"Jordan is a country that celebrates Arbour Day and encourages its youth to plant trees. I don't understand how they can pass laws to cut down trees," Mrs. Kamhawi said.

Princess Basma calls for quality education at kindergarten level

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Wednesday called upon the Ministry of Education and other concerned authorities to raise the standard and improve the efficiency of teachers and supervisors of kindergartens.

The Princess pointed out that quality teaching at the kindergarten level serves to lay a strong foundation for future generations.

Addressing the opening session of a workshop on the status of the kindergartens in Jordan, the Princess said substantial plans and endeavours by government, non-governmental institutions and charitable organisations at the kindergarten level will have beneficial results on the local communities.

The Princess said she was satisfied with the widespread availability of kindergartens in urban and rural regions, but added that there should not be a difference between the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens of urban areas and those of smaller towns and villages.

Princess Basma thanked the Ministry of Education, the United Nations Chil-

dren's Fund (UNICEF) and the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) for their efforts and recommended an expansion of kindergarten services to cover all parts of the Kingdom.

Addressing the session was Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat, who outlined the ministry's efforts in raising the standard of education at the kindergarten level.

UNICEF acting Regional Director Sima Babous told the meeting that, according to the Department of Statistics' 1994-95 survey, 12.4 per cent of the total number of children at the pre-school age in Jordan attend kindergartens.

The survey stated that 3 per cent attend kindergartens run by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), and that 49 per cent of the total number of the kindergartens in Jordan are run by the private sector, Dr. Babous said.

Participants in the workshop, which was organised in cooperation with UNICEF, included representatives of government-run and privately owned kindergartens.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Wednesday meets with women winners of last week's municipal elections (Petra photo)

Newly-elected women officials meet Princess Basma

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Wednesday congratulated the 10 women who won seats in the July 11 municipal council elections, and urged them to exert more efforts in their endeavour to live up to the expectations of their supporters as well as their communities.

The result of the elections reflects the level of public awareness and the efforts of Jordanian women who are committed to shouldering responsibilities and serving society, said the Princess at a meeting with the first woman mayor and nine municipal council members.

Addressing the group at a meeting held at the

King Hussein Youth City, the Princess said that the high number of votes achieved by the women candidates reflected a social transformation in society. She added that further efforts would lead to even greater successes.

The Princess said the work of various women's committees around the Kingdom was instrumental in ensuring their victory last week.

At a lunch hosted in their honour by Princess Basma, the newly-elected officials thanked the Princess for her own continued efforts to put women at the forefront of the nation's decision making process.

Labour unions condemn Serbian aggression, pledge to send more aid to Bosnian victims

AMMAN (Petra) — The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) Wednesday said Jordanian workers condemn the continuing Serbian aggression on the Bosnian people and were prepared to extend various forms of aid to the victims and displaced civilians of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Speaking on behalf of the federation, FJLU Secretary General Khaled Shreim said the continued onslaught and displacement of the Bosnian people exposes the fragility of the United Nations and its various organisations and

constitutes a flagrant violation of international rules and basic human rights.

He urged the Muslim nations to rally in support of the Bosnian Muslim nation in the face of Serbian aggression.

The federation Tuesday said Jordanian workers would donate one day's wages to help the Bosnian people in response to a call by His Majesty King Hussein to contribute towards alleviating the suffering of these war victims.

Condemnation of the Bosnian attacks came also

Wednesday from the acting mufti of Jordan, Sheikh Saeed Hijawi, who urged Jordanians to donate generously to help the Bosnians and appealed to the Arab and Muslim nations to "join hands in the defence of the oppressed people."

HCO sends second aid shipment

Meanwhile the Hashemite Charity Organisation (HCO) Wednesday sent off a second plane-load of relief aid to Bosnia and said more aid will be sent in the coming days.

The first consignment of aid was sent Tuesday.

The HCO secretary general supervised the departure of the consignment, and the crew accompanying the shipment said in a statement that the consignments are being dispatched, upon directives from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who is chairman of the HCO's board of trustees.

He said that the plane was carrying medical equipment, medicines and other relief supplies presented by the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services of

the Jordan Armed Forces and the private sector.

Accompanying the shipment is a group of officials representing the HCO, Jordan Radio and Television, the local press and the Jordan News Agency Petra.

At the airport to see the shipment and team off were several officials including the chargé d'affaires of the Bosnian embassy in Amman who said his country deeply appreciates the noble humanitarian sentiments of the Jordanian people in solidarity with the Bosnian victims of aggression.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh Wednesday meets with visiting Under Secretary of the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education Salem Ghamai to discuss cooperation in various spheres of the education sector (Petra photo)

Ukrainian delegation to arrive for trade talks

AMMAN (Petra) — A trade delegation from the Ukraine, led by the republic's deputy foreign minister, is due in Amman on July 27 for talks with the private and public sector representatives.

According to Haidar Murad, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, the delegation will visit the chamber to meet with private sector principals and explore areas for boosting bilateral trade.

Mr. Murad said that Jordan's exports to the Ukraine rose in value from JD 29,000 in 1992 to JD 107,000 in 1993 and JD 354,000 in 1994, while Jordanian imports from the Ukraine rose from JD 31.1 million in 1993 to JD 49.7 million in 1994.

In the first quarter of this

year, said Mr. Murad, Jordan's exports to the Ukraine were worth JD 75,000, and imports from the republic were estimated at JD 13 million.

With the balance of trade heavily in favour of Ukraine, Mr. Murad pointed out that Jordan hopes to adjust the balance through the coming talks in which it will seek to sell the Ukraine more Jordanian products.

According to Mr. Murad, the Kingdom's primary imports from the Ukraine include iron rods and iron used in construction, raw iron for industry, medical and chemical equipment and cars.

He said Jordan's exports to the republic include gas ranges, tissue paper, medicines, vegetables and fruits.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

* Concert by Latifa Al Tunisiyah of Tunis at the South Theatre on Thursday and Friday at 8:30 p.m.

* Shakespeare's "A Comedy of Errors" by the Oddssocks Production (U.K.) at the Artemis Steps on Thursday and Friday at 9:00 p.m.

* Concert by Zdravetz Folklore Group of Bulgaria at the Sound and Light Theatre on Thursday and Friday at 9:00 p.m.

* Poetry recital for children by Qamar Al Safadi at Gracia Theatre on Thursday and Friday at 8:00 p.m.

* Play for children entitled "Birds Talk to Humans" at the Sound and Light Theatre on Thursday and Friday at 7:45 p.m.

* "Street Show" by The Chipolatas at The Forum on Thursday and Friday at 9:30 p.m.

FILMS

* "Drums in the Deep South" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

* "El Maestro de Esgrima" at Instituto Cervantes on Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

FIELD TRIP

* Afternoon train trip to Daba'a Castle organised by the Friends of Archaeology Society on Thursday. (Participants must meet at the FoA Centre at 2:30 p.m. to head for the railway station near Marka to take the train at 3:30 p.m.)

Jerash Festival

Of Culture & Arts

July 19 - August 5

Activities Held by International Participants

South Theatre					
New England Youth Ensemble	USA	Sunday, Monday 23, 24/7	8.30 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
The Cavern Beatles	UK	Sunday, Monday 30, 31/7	8.30 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
Al-Andalus De Cadiz	Spain	Tuesday, Wednesday 1, 2/8	8.30 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
Artemis Steps					
The Comedy of Errors by the Oddssocks Productions	U.K.	Thursday, Friday 20, 21/7	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 5	
Blasorchester Langenhagen	Germany	Saturday, Sunday 29, 30/7	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
St. Peter Freisinger	Austria	Friday, Saturday 4, 5/8	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
Sound & Light Theatre					
Zdravetz Folklore Group	Bulgaria	Thursday, Friday 20, 21/7	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
Poltex Folklore Group	Poland	Tuesday, Wednesday 25, 26/7	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
Guem Drum Show	France	Friday, Saturday, Sunday 28, 29, 30/7	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
Lucnica Folklore Group	Slovakia	Tuesday, Wednesday 1, 2/8	9.00 pm	Ticket price JD 3	
The Forum					
Jugna Group	UK	Daily from Friday 28/7 till Friday 4/8			
Chipolatas Street Show	UK	Daily from Thursday 20/7 till Wednesday 26/7			
Zdravetz Folklore Group	Bulgaria	Saturday, Sunday, Monday 22, 23, 24/7			
Poltex Folklore Group	Poland	Thursday, Friday, Saturday 27, 28, 29/7			
Lucnica Folklore Group	Slovakia	Thursday, Friday, Saturday 3, 4, 5/8			
Royal Cultural Centre					
Opera Singer Christopher Barashevich	Poland	Thursday 27/7	Ticket price JD 5		
Eugene Ballet Company	USA	Wednesday, Thursday 2, 3/8	Ticket price JD 8		
Outside Amman					
Opera Singer Christopher Barashevich	Poland	Wednesday 26/7	Ticket price JD 20		
In cooperation with Romero Restaurant - Umm Qais					
Pianist Alberto Pomaraz	Italy	Wednesday 2/8	Ticket price JD 25		
In cooperation with Romero Restaurant - Mount Nebo					
Guem Drum Show	France	Monday 31/7	Ticket price JD 20		
In cooperation with Romero Restaurant - Umm Qais					

Royal Cultural Centre

Opera Singer Christopher Barashevich Poland Thursday 27/7 Ticket price JD 5

Eugene Ballet Company USA Wednesday, Thursday 2, 3/8 Ticket price JD 8

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In cooperation with Romero Restaurant - Mount Nebo

Guem Drum Show France Monday 31/7 Ticket price JD 20

In cooperation with Romero Restaurant - Umm Qais

Tickets are available at:

Amman: Royal Cultural Centre - National Music Conservatory - Abdali: Jen Busses Co.

Shmeisat: Tyche Hotel - Florbel Flowers - 6th Circle: San Rock Hotel - 7th Circle: Music Box

Swefeh: Ishtak Library - Wasfi Alal Str. - Al-Waha Restaurant - Green Meadows Tourism Co.

Airport Highway: Seven Hills Restaurant - Irbid: Jordanian Market Est.

Madaba: Miraj for Travel & Tourism - Jerash: Jerash Cultural Club - Zarqa: Al-Shammas Tourism Co.

Beijing dismisses Taiwan concerns over missile test

BEIJING (AFP) — Taiwan should not be concerned over China's plans to conduct surface-to-surface guided missile manoeuvres next week, a senior Chinese diplomat said here Wednesday.

Following a plunge in the Taiwan Stock Market and a popular outcry that greeted China's announcement Tuesday that the exercise would take place just off the northern tip of Taiwan, the diplomat said any concerns on the Nationalist island were symptomatic of a guilty conscience.

"In China we have a saying: 'If your conscience is clear, you needn't fear a knock on the door in the middle of the night,'" said the diplomat, who asked not to be identified.

He also reiterated China's official position that the mainland would only attempt to invade the island — which Beijing views as a renegade province — if Taiwan attempt to declare independence or was taken over by a foreign power.

Taiwanese leaders called on the public to remain calm Wednesday as the local bourse tumbled 4.2 per cent to a 19-month low on China's announcement of the missile exercise to be conducted between July 21 and 28.

The missile launch exercise "into the open sea" will take place within an area with a radius of 10 nautical miles, centered on a point of latitude 26 degrees 22 minutes north and longitude 122 degrees 10 minutes east.

With relations across the Taiwan Strait currently under enormous strain after last month's visit to the United States by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui, some observers have seen the exercise as a provocative show of China's military might.

However, military experts here said it would be necessary to wait and see the exact nature of the exercise before determining whether the Taiwanese concerns were well-founded.

"If this is to be a test firing of a new ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile), I would tend to see it in the context of China's military modernisation programme rather than a move aimed at Taiwan," said a Western military attaché based in Beijing.

That view was echoed by another Western diplomat, who said the lengthy period allotted to the exercise and the size of the designated impact zone suggested an ICBM test-firing that would have been long in the pre-planning stage.

"This isn't something you can organise at the drop of the hat, which would make the timing more coincidental than deliberate," he said.

However, another military attaché pointed out that the official Chinese announcement had specified a "practice" launch exercise, rather than a "test" — indicating the use of a missile, or missiles, already in service.

"That could mean ship-to-ship launches of smaller missiles like the Silkworm, which would be far easier to arrange and would bear out Taiwan's anxieties," he said.

The announcement, which warned all foreign vessels and aircraft to steer clear of the impact zone during the seven-day period, did not specify if the launches would be land-based or sea-based.

Taiwan's government Wednesday deplored China's plans for the exercise off the island's northern coast, but ruled out putting its army on alert.

"What mainland China plans (to do) will endanger security and peace in the Asian and Pacific region," said a statement from the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), Taiwan's top organ planning mainland policy.

"The exercise is aimed at creating instability within our country, but the public should be aware of this and not panic," said MAC Chairman Vincent Siew.

The appeal was also made by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui, after he was briefed on the announcement from Beijing Tuesday that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would conduct the exercise off the tip of Taiwan from Friday.

The Civil Aeronautics Administration said Taiwan would temporarily close its B57E airline to South Korea, a route flown by the U.S.-based Continental Airlines.

Thai International, Singapore Airlines and the Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific Airways.

The Council of Agriculture said the planned exercise will also interfere with some 200 Taiwanese trawlers fishing in the region.

The Taipei Stock Exchange closed Wednesday fell to a 19-month low, closing with share prices down 4.2 per cent. The weighted price index tumbled 229.15 points to settle at 5,187.79 points, its lowest level since December 1993. That followed a 12.46-point drop Tuesday.

"The Chinese army's announcement sparked nervous individual investors to dump shares," said Alice Lo of the Grand Pacific Securities Investment Trust.

Taiwanese military authorities "have no plan yet to heighten our military preparedness or launch any counteraction," said Defense Minister Chiang Chung-Ling.

The missile test is part of China's annual training programme, though its location, about 90 kilometres (44 miles) north of Penghu Island, may be meant "as a warning" to both Taiwan and the United States, Mr. Chiang said.

A Western diplomat in Beijing said that missile training cannot be organised "at the drop of a hat" and therefore the timing of the exercises is probably "coincidental."

Heat-related deaths were reported from Texas to New England in the northeast, but the Chicago area in the Midwest appeared hardest hit.

"It appears that the worst is over, but nobody knows where it's going to stop," said Edmund Donoghue, medical examiner for Cook County, which includes Chicago.

Mr. Donoghue said the final death toll for Chicago, the country's third largest city and a busy financial centre, would top 400.

Officials in the medical examiner's office told AFP that 30 additional bodies were stored in refrigerated trucks pending examination Wednesday with whatever corpses are found overnight.

"They're just starting to find the bodies," said one official, who asked not to be named. A total of 137 bodies was found in funeral homes, adding to the 239 already admitted to the morgue.

Illinois Governor Jim Edgar declared Cook County a state disaster area.

The burning heat has been blamed for 669 deaths nationwide including that of a two-year-old girl in the southern city of Louisiana who spent three hours in the family car where temperatures reached 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit).

The soaring temperatures also took a heavy economic toll, with losses in agriculture and shut-down businesses.

The heat wave in Chicago peaked at 41 degrees Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) Thursday.

The overflow of bodies forced officials to add another refrigerated van to the seven needed already due to lack of space inside the morgue.

Masked employees, telling reporters about the powerful stench inside the examining room, were kept busy transporting the newly discovered victims, many in an advanced state of decomposition, outside to the waiting vans.

Most of the victims were elderly or ill people living in apartments lacking air conditioning. Many victims had not opened their windows, fearing for their safety.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley instructed city officials to look into the health of elderly people and move them to cooler quarters if they were in danger. But most emergency shelters lacked air conditioning and

and nurses of Indian and Pakistani origin with French nationality from Reunion.

Five of the dead were army air crew from Madagascar and the identity of eight dead had yet to be determined. Six passengers were injured, five seriously, the statement added.

The medical team worked for Karana Humanitarian Association based on Reunion and were delivering staff and medicine to projects in Madagascar, the world's fourth largest island and one of its poorest countries.

Officials said an inquiry was under way into what caused the ageing propeller-driven plane to crash, but technical problems were suspected.

The D-3 was on a flight from the northwestern Malagasy town of Maintirano, 300 kilometres west of Antananarivo. The medical team had been due to return to Reunion later Tuesday.

The volcanic island of Reunion, 650 kilometres east of Madagascar, is an overseas department of France with status of a region and headquarters of French military forces in the Indian Ocean.

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Research on the project, conducted by the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), was sponsored by the Imperial Palace, and financed to the tune of 10 million yen (\$2.5 million at the time), Mr. Suzuki said.

"We were at such a primitive stage that we had no practical idea how to use the bomb, what we had in mind was to use the atomic bomb to bomb air bases like the island of Saipan from which American B29s were used against Japan," he said.

Around 130,000 people died in Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, according to some estimates. Three days later, 70,000 died in Nagasaki.

Mr. Suzuki said he believed in the project right up to the end, even faced with the devastation of Hiroshima. "After seeing the victims in Hiroshima, I hoped we would only use the bomb on military targets."

In the last days of the war, three members of the research team, including Mr.

Suzuki, were sent to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to "give some explanation" about this new weapon for the report to be sent to Emperor Hirohito.

Mr. Suzuki said Emperor Hirohito "never had any involvement in the project, never signed anything and was never sent any reports."

He said that in the last months of the war, two members of the Imperial Family, both army officers — Emperor Hirohito's younger brother Prince Takamatsu and his cousin Prince Tsuneyoshi Takeda — came to see how the project was progressing.

According to Mr. Suzuki, Japan "did not know" anything of the Manhattan Project, in which the United States developed the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, although Japan was aware there was research ongoing on the subject.

Mr. Suzuki said the Japanese had not exchanged any information on the bomb with their German allies. Japan had however tried to buy two tonnes of Uranium-

238 at the beginning of the war but the Germans expressed concern about its ultimate use and the deal fell through.

The uranium used by the Japanese was brought from what is now North Korea. In 1945, Japanese experts, using a cyclotron bought in the United States, succeeded in separating the uranium to an intermediate stage, producing four to five kilograms (nine to 10 pounds) of uranium hexafluoride, a gas.

Meanwhile, the Americans were using a machine 150 times more powerful at the University of Berkeley in California.

"There was a point by 1945, when 40 of us believed it was very, very unlikely that we would develop the bomb before the end of the war," he said, adding that he thought it needed a lot more work.

News of the project has only just emerged, in part because Mr. Suzuki, in the last days of the war, was ordered to destroy all documents about it.



Workers at the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office move the body of a victim reportedly killed by heat-related causes in Chicago (AFP photo)

U.S. heat wave toll reaches 669

CHICAGO (AFP) — The death toll from the worst heat wave in the United States in 15 years hit 669, with more casualties expected as bodies are recovered, officials said Tuesday.

In Chicago, 376 people died since last week from causes related to the blistering heat, authorities said. Temperatures eased Monday but forecasters predicted that they could rise again over the weekend.

Heat-related deaths were reported from Texas to New England in the northeast, but the Chicago area in the Midwest appeared hardest hit.

"It appears that the worst is over, but nobody knows where it's going to stop," said Edmund Donoghue, medical examiner for Cook County, which includes Chicago.

Mr. Donoghue said the final death toll for Chicago, the country's third largest city and a busy financial centre, would top 400.

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Diana and sons spotted in Rocky Mountains

DENVER (R) — Celebrity watchers have been searching for Princess Diana and her two sons at all the posh places in the Colorado Rockies, but it seems she's taking a real American holiday — going bowling and eating pizza.

Princess Diana, the estranged wife of Britain's Prince Charles, was spotted last week at El Jebow Bowling Alley in El Jebel, Colorado, said Matt Stecklein, assistant manager at his family's bowling alley. "She was with her two sons and a couple other guys," said Mr. Stecklein, who declined to give Princess Diana's shoe size. The bowling shoes she rented were put back on the shelf to be reused, the said. Over the weekend, the royals and a few friends ordered pizzas at Pizza Mama's, near the bowling alley, said Garrett Del Castillo, who waited on the group. "Diana didn't say a word and I didn't recognize her right away. Hey, this is El Jebel, Colorado," said Del Castillo. El Jebel is about 40 miles (65 km) west of Aspen, the trendy ski resort town. The princess arrived in Denver last week but has managed to elude reporters and photographers.

"One difference between us and up north, air conditioners are almost universal here," said Dr. Patrick Meehan, director of public health in Georgia, one of the hottest and muggiest states. "I suspect that people in the south are more used to dealing with hot weather, so they know to drink cold liquids, they know to use fans, they know to check on elderly loved ones," Mr. Meehan added.

In all areas affected by the heat wave authorities urge people to avoid strenuous outdoor exercise and to drink plenty of liquids.

The heat wave that began last Wednesday was the most deadliest since 1980, when an estimated 1,500 people died of heat-related causes.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control said there is no national (federal) standard for identifying heat-related deaths.

After World War II, Chiang lost the civil war to Mao and fled to Taiwan, where the Nationalist government remains in power, saying it alone was the legal government of all China. The Hitler coin, which has a picture of the Nuremberg War Criminal Court on the reverse side, was black and was designed like an ancient coin, the newspaper said.

"Secret" Stones concert prompts stampede for tickets

LONDON (AFP) — About 5,000 Rolling Stones fans quipped Tuesday to obtain tickets for a "secret" concert in London to round off the British leg of their world tour. But the secret was badly kept and, by Monday night, crowds had already gathered outside a record shop in Oxford Street, central London, where the tickets were to be issued. The venue, at the Brixton Academy, in the south of London, holds 3,600 people and is more intimate than the band's usual stadium venues. Tuesday morning a commercial radio broke the news officially and launched a rush for tickets as about 5,000 Stones fans turned up by 10:00 a.m. to claim the remaining 2,500 places. The lucky ones paid £25 (\$40) for tickets and a wristband to prevent illicit ticket sellers from cashing in. "It's been a bit chaotic but it's good, a bit of a surprise," a spokesman said.

Robbie Williams leaves Take That pop group

LONDON (AFP) — Teenage heartthrob and singer Robbie Williams announced that he was leaving the British pop group Take That in order to go solo. Williams, who at 21 has amassed a small fortune from his four-year-old singing career, is leaving his four other partners in the group on good terms, the group manager Nigel Martin-Smith said. "He was no longer able to give commitment they needed," Martin-Smith said. The group, whose latest song Back For Good has shot to the top of record play lists, will nonetheless go on with its planned summer tour in Manchester and London, but without Williams.

Yarmouk U will establish a centre at a cost of 900,000. U Assistant President Ibrahim Badir said Mr. E the centre, which established in the side of the university campus, will cost \$1 million. He said it is expected to generate profits of 130,000 (AJ Duster).

Royal Jordan will soon decide of airlines it will transport passengers. RJ has over the past several months and several small airports would suit its needs. Rights to Ajlun, Sheikh Taba, Ajlun, Cairo, Beirut, Doha, and Larnaca. The aircraft will be from the Marks Amman (AJ Rai).

The Jordan Investments Co. a local contractor, this week signed a contract to start the first stage of the Amman Hotel in Amman area near Circle. The JD says, which would be completed within 210 days laying the foundation for the 313-room hotel, including a swimming pool. The hotel project is completed in Amman.

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Disaster.

Yarmouk U will establish a centre at a cost of 900,000. U Assistant President Ibrahim Badir said Mr. E the centre, which established in the side of the university campus, will cost \$1 million. He said it is expected to generate profits of 130,000 (AJ Duster).

Royal Jordan will soon decide of airlines it will transport passengers. RJ has over the past several months and several small airports would suit its needs. Rights to Ajlun, Sheikh Taba, Ajlun, Cairo, Beirut, Doha, and Larnaca. The aircraft will be from the Marks Amman (AJ Rai).

Philippines moves to normalise ties with Singapore

MANILA (AFP) — President Fidel Ramos Wednesday said the Philippines was taking steps to normalise relations with Singapore after the apparent settlement of the dispute over the executed Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion.

Mr. Ramos told a press conference that the Philippines "has started to take steps to normalise its relations with Singapore."

He did not specify what measures were being taken. Asked if he was going to appoint a new ambassador to Singapore soon, Mr. Ramos smiled and said: "Just wait."

Ties between the two countries were downgraded after Contemplacion was hanged in Singapore in March for the murder of fellow Filipina maid Delia Maga and Maga's charge, a Singaporean toddler, in Singapore in 1991.

A third-party autopsy in the United States earlier this month supported Singapore's finding that Contemplacion had strangled Maga.

Many Filipinos insisted that Contemplacion was innocent, staging massive protests on her behalf. Philippine pathologists found that Maga had been beaten before her death, probably by a man.

To settle the issue, the two countries agreed to the third-party autopsy on the condition that Singapore would reopen the case if its own findings were not upheld and that the Philippines would normalise relations if Singapore's findings were upheld.

Asked if he believed that the third-party autopsy proved that Contemplacion was guilty, Mr. Ramos said determining her guilt, "was done during the four-year-long process in the Singapore courts."

Mr. Ramos recalled that after Contemplacion was hanged, he vowed to cut off ties with Singapore if it was found that she was innocent.

But he also recalled saying that "if, on the other hand, the facts bear out another verdict, I say we must also have the grace to acknowledge before the world that our outrage has been misplaced."



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (left) looks on as Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin (centre) goes through some documents with the member of the Russian delegation for peace negotiations in Chechnya, Vyacheslav Mikhailov

during their meeting in the Central Clinical Hospital in Moscow. During their one-hour meeting they discussed the peace process in Chechnya, economic reform, December's legislative elections and foreign policy (AFP photo)

Chernomyrdin jeered in parliament over Chechnya

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin faced jeering by Russian nationalists in the lower house of parliament Wednesday when he spoke on moves to end the Chechnya conflict.

Defending peace talks that he initiated and arguing that the bloodshed in the north Caucasus territory had to be stopped, Mr. Chernomyrdin declared: "Everything must be done to achieve this."

He faced heckling from extreme right deputies including Nikolai Lysenko, head of the radical National Republican Party of Russia, who shouted "murderer" and "traitor" at him after he had spoken.

Thousands have been killed in the mainly Muslim territory since President Boris Yeltsin sent in troops and tanks last December to crush a drive for independence.

Mr. Chernomyrdin rejected charges by Mr. Lysenko that peace talks which have been taking place between the government and Chechen rebels in the regional capital of Grozny amounted to a betrayal.

The talks, which were broken off for three days last Sunday when the chief Chechen delegate fell sick, were scheduled to resume in

Grozny Thursday.

President Boris Yeltsin said Tuesday after meeting Mr. Chernomyrdin that he had found a solution to three or four "issues of principle" that would be presented to the Chechen side. Details were not known.

The main stumbling block at the talks is the constitutional status of Chechnya, the issue at the very heart of the conflict.

Russia's war on Chechnya was justified because the breakaway region was a "threat to man, society and the state," Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai argued before the Constitutional Court Tuesday.

Mr. Shakhrai gave the closing argument for President Yeltsin in a case brought by parliament challenging the legality of the seven-month war and the presidential decrees that launched it.

Arguing for parliament, lawmaker Anatoly Lukyanov, said political goals don't justify illegal means.

He told the court it could end up contributing to "despotism and the unleashing of more conflicts" in Russia, "even civil war," if it rules in the government's favour.

One justice, Valery Zorkin, tried to persuade the court to seek additional testi-

mony, saying judges still didn't know "all the motivations" for the president's decrees.

The court rebuffed him, however, and retired to consider its verdict. Kremlin officials have said they hope for a ruling by the end of the week.

Mr. Shakhrai told the judges that the Chechen government was guilty of human rights violations and that between President Dzhokhar Dudayev's supporters and opponents made it impossible for Russia to negotiate with Mr. Dudayev. He said the real crime for Russia would have been to do nothing.

Lawmakers have argued that Mr. Yeltsin had no legal authority to send in troops without consulting parliament.

Russia covertly back Mr. Dudayev's opponents, supplying them with arms, money and political support. After the covert war failed, Mr. Yeltsin sent tens of thousands of troops into Chechnya on Dec. 11.

Mr. Yeltsin and his top aides have portrayed the war as a bid to end Chechnya's three years of self-declared independence and repeatedly claimed Mr. Dudayev was a dictator and a criminal who took power in an illegal election.

Meanwhile President Yel-

sin's television appearance served to quell rumours about his health but doubts remained Wednesday about his ability to run for reelection in 1996 after he was hospitalised with a serious heart condition.

Mr. Yeltsin, 64, seemed unusually sprightly in the television footage that showed him wearing a track suit and smiling Tuesday. It was his first interview since being rushed to hospital on July 11.

Mr. Yeltsin said "I had a heart attack due to ischaemia" — a condition which reduces blood flow to an organ.

According to press reports Wednesday, Mr. Yeltsin was only shown on television to quell rumours about his health fuelled by publication of a photograph of the president which some said was taken several months ago in the Caucasus.

In the television footage Mr. Yeltsin was shown greeting Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin with a hug, and trying to reassure viewers about his condition.

Perhaps as part of this effort, Mr. Yeltsin remained standing throughout the interview, lasting nearly 10 minutes. Apart from being rather short of breath, the president appeared relaxed.

Sri Lankan army gives up captured areas, officials say

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops have withdrawn from some areas captured last week from Tamil Tiger guerrillas in their northern Jaffna peninsula stronghold, officials said Wednesday, contradicting army statements.

"In many places recently captured by the army, troops have begun going back to their homes," a government official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

The military has repeatedly denied troops have withdrawn from the 78-square-kilometre area. It says were captured by the rebels in "Operation Leap Forward," which took soldiers to within six kilometres of the city of Jaffna.

"I totally deny the army has withdrawn from captured areas," a military spokesman said Wednesday.

"We have not withdrawn but have made some adjustments. We went there in very big strength and the entire strength is not going to stay. Some troops have come back."

Troops were poised to resume their push on Jaffna town, military sources said Wednesday.

The rebels, fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east, have admitted losing 80 fighters, including women suicide bombers, in heavy fighting with government troops since Friday.

The military has said 71 soldiers have been killed and 255 wounded in the 10-day-old operation.

The government official, speaking in Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control, said the army was holding positions north of Alaveddy on the

Jaffna peninsula.

"There are many soldiers there and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) is getting ready to fight them," he said.

But he said most refugee camps were emptying as people started going back home.

A Catholic priest from Jaffna said hospitals in the city were overflowing with civilians wounded in the fighting and about half of them have had limbs amputated.

"I've never seen such a sight in all my life," he told Reuters at Vavuniya, adding that hospital staff were working round-the-clock to cope with the flood of wounded, many of whom were transferred to other hospitals in the peninsula.

On Tuesday, Tamil Tiger guerrillas tried to steal medicine from a hospital but were driven off by police gunfire, police said Wednesday.

About 75 rebels tried to storm the Manampitiya Rural Hospital in the Polonnaruwa district Tuesday night, they said. No casualties were reported on either side.

Police said the guerrillas were apparently trying to get medicines to treat their wounded from last week's battles.

The rebels fled the hospital and set off a bomb on a nearby bridge but caused no damage, police said.

At least three civilians were killed Monday and nine wounded in a clash between an army patrol and rebels in eastern Batticaloa district, a military spokeswoman said.

The civilians were killed "as a result of terrorist mortar and small-arms fire," she told Reuters.

Meanwhile a former Tamil separatist who is now a member of Sri Lanka's parliament said Wednesday Tamils

would desert the rebel movement like ticks from a dying dog once the government announced its devolution package.

Douglas Devananda, two Browning pistols strapped to a khaki belt, urged the government to halt its Operation Leap Forward against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), announce the peace package, then focus on wiping out the rebels.

Mr. Devananda said his Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) had supported the government because President Chandrika Kumaratunga accepted there was an ethnic problem in the north and east that had to be solved politically.

"There is no second way to defeat the LTTE," said Mr. Devananda at his Colombo headquarters, fortified by 50 EPDP cadres and two watch-towers. "Only after the political package is presented to the people can you defeat the LTTE."

The government has promised to announce measures this month offering the minority Tamils widespread devolution in the north and east.

The LTTE has been fighting since 1983 for a separate homeland in the north and east. The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war.

The EPDP, which has nine seats in parliament, fears the government is too interested in gaining territory rather than winning over Tamils living in rebel-held areas.

On Saturday, Mr. Devananda told Reuters his party might quit parliament unless the government stopped the offensive. On Wednesday, he said he had four demands on which he wanted reassur-

ances from the government, or the EPDP would quit.

"It must assure us it will release the package now, send relief immediately to people in uncleared areas in the north, stop indiscriminate bombing and set up a commission to see what went wrong" in previous bombing raids.

On the first day of Operation Leap Forward, Catholic Church was bombed just north of Jaffna town. Mr. Devananda and the International Committee of the Red Cross have blamed the air force. The death toll was put at between 65 and 121.

"The armed forces must avoid civilians," he said. "And it must stop indiscriminate bombing."

"Once the dog dies, the ticks will leave because they cannot take blood," said Mr. Devananda, a founding member of the militant Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) in 1975 and received some of his training in Lebanon.

"Once the government puts the political package to the Tamil-speaking people, the same thing will happen to the LTTE."

"After that you can fight. We don't care if the LTTE accepts the peace plan or not because (LTTE leader Velupillai) Prabhakaran is fighting merely to safeguard his own politics and himself. He wants the war to continue or he can hold on to his dictatorship."

Mr. Devananda said the EPDP's intention was to "defeat the LTTE and rescue" the Tamil-speaking people.

"Any government that can do that we will not only welcome, we will give our fullest cooperation."

Suu Kyi appears in public for Martyrs' Day

RANGOON (AFP) — Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi laid flowers Wednesday at the memorial to her father and eight others murdered here 48 years ago as they planned Burma's independence from Britain.

The brief, three-minute appearance for Martyrs' Day was her first in public since her release July 10 from nearly six years of house arrest.

Scores of foreign journalists witnessed her appearance, the first time she has participated in the wreath-laying ceremony and the first time the government has allowed the media to record it.

But the general public was not allowed to attend, and she did not cross paths with the government members who had left moments before her arrival after paying homage at the monument.

Later, after returning home from the ceremony, Ms. Suu Kyi went to the gate of her home three times to talk to a crowd of hundreds of supporters who were taking advantage of the holiday to come hear her speech.

"Follow the path that the martyrs have set for us," she told at least 1,000 clapping, cheering Burmese at a late afternoon appearance, adding that they should not do anything wrong or foolish.

She called their visit a tribute to the fallen martyrs as well as to her.

Ms. Suu Kyi also said she was sorry she could not meet personally with everyone who wanted to see her, but "there are only 24 hours in a day."

The crowd was so large this time that it briefly blocked the five-lane University Avenue, despite the presence of several traffic policemen.

"We love her," one taxi driver said. "We respect and love her."

Ms. Suu Kyi also hosted a lunch Wednesday for her household staff, security guards and close friends.

In the late afternoon she invited the huge press corps in for tea but made it clear that no photographs were to be taken and no questions asked.

The solemn Martyrs' Day ceremony was held early in the morning amid tight security at the Martyrs' Mausoleum, a red concrete monument with a yellow star and a white concrete bier in front.

Brigadier Thang Mying, the Burmese minister of culture, mounted the steps to the platform and was assisted by an honour guard in placing four wreaths before the monument.

He and other members of the government bowed their

heads in silence for about two minutes, and then left.

Ms. Suu Kyi arrived about ten minutes later in a car at the base of the monument.

Wearing a black shawl over a cream-coloured blouse and a black longyi (sarong), her face was expressionless as she placed baskets of flowers in front and at either end of the bier.

The daughter of independence hero Aung San bowed her head in silence before leaving. The ceremony commemorates the murders on July 19, 1947, of her father, seven of his colleagues in the liberation struggle and a security guard.

They were gunned down by men in uniform as they met to plan the transfer of power from Burma's colonial ruler, Britain. Independence came to Burma the following January.

Burmese authorities placed Ms. Suu Kyi under house arrest in July 1989 because of her strident criticism of the military government in speeches ahead of national elections the next year that were swept by her National League for Democracy (NLD).

The junta subsequently refused to recognise the vote and did not hand over power.

Since her release, Ms. Suu Kyi has vowed to continue her efforts to bring democracy to Burma.

On the eve of her first major public appearance in six years, Ms. Suu Kyi urged

her followers Tuesday to maintain unity in the struggle for democracy.

She confided with members of her party, as she had done often in recent days, said her cousin and press secretary, Aye Win.

Ms. Suu Kyi later spoke to a crowd of about 300 people outside her home, asking them for love and kindness.

"Before we can achieve what we want, we must be unconditionally united," she told them, adding that the time to work out differences would come after their goal of democratic government was reached. She made a similar appeal to party members and well-wishers Monday, without disclosing her political plans.

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15 die as violence escalates in Karachi

KARACHI (AFP) — An upsurge of violence claimed 15 lives here Wednesday, ahead of another session of peace talks between the government and the opposition Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), officials said.

Tension was high in western Orangi Township, following a pitched battle between police and militants which left six people dead, including a police officer, security officials said.

Police in armoured vehicles have intensified their patrols in the area where firing erupted Tuesday night, residents said.

"I shut myself and my children in a room and switched off lights," said Asma Begum, a housewife. "My children started screaming, and I could hear cries from neighbouring houses," she added.

Police officer Khadim Hussain, 50, was kidnapped by masked armed men from his Orangi residence. His body was later dumped in an isolated area, police said, adding that another person was shot dead by militants on suspicion of being a police informer.

"This is the fate of informers," said a note found in Hussain's pocket, a police official said.

Four others were killed in the sprawling eastern industrial district of Korangi, while three were shot dead in Gulbahaar neighbourhood and one more died in sniper fire in the nearby Nazimabad district in central Karachi, hospital sources said.

Shops and markets remained closed and traffic was thin in Gulbahaar where five people were shot dead Tuesday.

Groups of armed men fired guns in the volatile central district of Liaquatabad, forcing shopkeepers to pull down their shutters.

The sudden escalation in violence came on the eve of Thursday's fourth round of

talks between the government and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the MQM, which represents the many ethnic Mohajir migrants from India.

The government has blamed the MQM for much of the political and ethnic violence in Karachi where more than 2,000 people have died over the past 18 months.

The group denies the charge and accuses Mr. Bhutto of pursuing anti-Mohajir policies.

In their third session Monday, the two sides agreed to cooperate with each other in efforts to end the bloodshed.

The MQM has presented 18 political and social demands, including increased quotas in government jobs and the withdrawal of criminal charges against party leaders.

Ms. Bhutto's Law Minister Nabi Dad Khan, who is leading the government team, has said MQM's major demands

could not be discussed until peace is established in Karachi.

Ajmal Delvi said before leaving here for Islamabad that the government should "fulfill its promises" and redress the grievances of the Mohajir community.

Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and commercial hub, continues to be rocked by daily killing despite the government-MQM talks, which began on July 11 in Islamabad.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Naseerullah Bahar, quoted by the official Associated Press of Pakistan, said the government had decided to withdraw police protection for banks and other establishments in Karachi.

Police officers would then be free for other assignments, he said, adding the government had decided to recall retired paramilitary personnel to deal with the situation in Karachi.

German CDU wants to woo 'green' voters

BONN (R) — Germany's ruling Christian Democrats, worried by the growing influence of the Greens Party, plan to compete head-on with the ecologists for the support of the country's environmentally-minded voters.

A political strategy session led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl agreed Tuesday to push for fresh ecology measures, including a new car tax aimed at cutting harmful CO₂ emissions, as a way to show the party's commitment to protecting the environment.

Party leaders also urged deputies to stop speculating about a possible coalition with the once-radical Greens after the 1998 national election, saying this favourite topic of Bonn gossip was turning off conservative voters around the country.

"The Greens do not have a monopoly on 'green' policies or voters," Bavarian State Premier Edmund Stoiber told German radio Wednesday after the leadership meeting in

Bonn. "There's a permanent struggle for voters."

Mr. Kohl has already stolen a march on the strategy session, lining up last month with a Greenpeace-led campaign against the planned deep-sea sinking of Shell's Brent Spar oil platform.

After his unusual step of urging British Prime Minister John Major to oppose the plan, the chancellor followed up with another rare move — raising with President Jacques Chirac the broad public opposition in Germany to new French nuclear tests.

Mr. Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), now plan to draw up revisions to car taxes by Oct. 5 as the first step towards a new environmental image.

CDU General Secretary Peter Hintze said the party wanted to have car taxes measured according to a vehicle's output of harmful exhaust rather than by engine

capacity as at present.

He also said that speculation in recent months about a possible "Black-Green" coalition with the environmentalists only boosted support for the Greens.

"Anyone who talks about 'Black-Green' only talks up the Greens, talks the FDP to death and hurts the Christian Democrats," Mr. Hintze told journalists.

Worries about the future of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), Mr. Kohl's ailing liberal coalition partner, have been behind both the recent speculation about joining the Greens and the decision now to try to beat them.

The liberals have lost all their seats in 12 of Germany's 16 states and in national opinion polls now hover just at or below the five per cent minimum they need to hold on to their seats in the federal parliament in Bonn.

More failures in the next four state polls — in Berlin in October and in Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-

Holstein and Baden-Wuerttemberg next March — could rule the FDP out as a possible coalition partner for the CDU in 1998.

The CDU would then embark on the highly risky strategy of seeking an overall majority in 1998, something it achieved only once before — in 1957 — when there were only three rather than five parties in parliament.

Although he has announced he wants to step down in 1998, party officials say Mr. Kohl might well decide to run again just to maximise the CDU's chances.

Under Germany's complex voting law, the CDU would only have to win about 45 per cent of the national vote to gain an absolute majority of seats in parliament.

The CDU won 41.5 per cent in the 1994 election and its FDP partner 6.9 per cent. The opposition Social Democrats Scored 36.4 per cent and the Greens 7.3 per cent.



Burmese democratic opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, surrounded by supporters, addresses a crowd gathered in front of her lakeside compound. The 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner officially appeared in public at the tomb of her father, Burma's liberation hero Aung San, Wednesday on Burmese Martyrs' Day (AFP photo)

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Jordan Times

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Free press across bridge?

THE PALESTINIAN National Authority (PNA) has presented the new press law that will govern the working of the media in the self-rule areas as a democratic piece of legislation that upholds the freedom of expression. Many a journalist and human rights activist say the legislation is neither democratic nor conducive to the exercise of freedom of the press. An examination of the provisions of the law tends to support the view of these journalists and activists. It seems that the mentality which governed formulation of the law was not exactly democratic. It appears as though it preferred operating in the dark, believed government organs should be protected from scrutiny and took lightly the people's right to learn not only about public issues but also about the way in which the government handles them. In short, this is the mentality of a by-gone era that is not suitable for the spirit of the new times.

The Palestinian people have for long been suffering from a ruthless occupation that suppressed their freedoms. They have endured more than their share of censorship. As the occupation seems to be coming to an end, though, the Palestinians deserve to enjoy the freedoms without which they will not be able to build their country and develop its institutions. A free press is a major pillar of democracy. Without the freedom to collect and present information on all issues of public concern, it will be difficult to create a system of accountability that will guard against corruption and dictatorship by authorities.

With this in mind, the PNA should not disappoint its constituency. Nor should it depend on a paternal system of government as it tries to establish itself in the self-rule areas. The press law that it formulated rings with alarm about the way in which the PNA seems to be going about asserting its presence in the autonomous Palestinian lands. Palestinian officials must seriously consider the negative implication of the new law for the freedom of the press and immediately reverse it. Otherwise, the new Palestinian entity will have a deformed press, which would not be in anybody's interest. That will bode ill not only for the Palestinian media but also for all Palestinians, including their government.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily urged Jordanians to respond to a call by His Majesty King Hussein to extend a helping hand to the Bosnian people, the victims of Serbian aggression. The suffering inflicted on the Bosnian people, who have been displaced and helpless, should prompt every Jordanian individual and organisation to contribute whatever they can and offer financial and in-kind assistance to the victims of aggression, said Samir Hiyari. Saying that Jordanians have in the past rallied to help victims of disasters in Sudan, Egypt and other parts of the world, the writer said, it would not be difficult for Jordanians to organise shipments of medicine and food to be sent to Bosnia to alleviate the sufferings of and the plight of its Muslim people. Hailing plans by Jordan Television to act as a catalyst in prompting Jordanians to send in contributions through this coming Friday's programmes, the writer said other media should copy this initiative, and journalists have a duty to mobilise Jordanian people's efforts in this regard. The writer said that the Bosnian people are currently exposed to persecution because of their faith and not as consequence of any crime or sin, and they deserve all forms of assistance to help them stand fast in the face of oppression.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dastour urged the concerned authorities to collect fire arms in the possession of Jordanian people because these weapons have been responsible for many deaths and injuries, causing much suffering to Jordanian families. Mohammad Daoud said that it is regrettable that a government decision several years ago to collect fire arms has been ignored, with the result that many people still possess automatic rifles and automatic guns not only pistols which they have been using not only during social occasions like weddings but also to take revenge on others following disputes. Succumbing to pressure from many sources, the government has regrettably failed to collect the weapons, which are still found in great quantities in urban and rural regions of Jordan and particularly in the hadia.



The View from Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

Revisiting Palestine: The 19th century is almost over

ABOUT 27 years since my last visit there in 1968, I made a brief trip to Palestine and Israel earlier this week, on the happy occasion of a family wedding in Nazareth and Jerusalem. The trip, though brief, reinforced all of my previous attitudes and convictions about the nature of Israel and Zionism, and the prospects of mutually satisfactory coexistence, in peace and justice, by Arabs and Israelis.

Today, obviously, the land is defined by conflict, mutual fear, Zionist colonialism and racism, and Palestinian self-doubt and uncertainty. We do not enjoy peace and justice in Palestine. But these — which we also call Palestinian national rights — are our goals. The challenge before us now is how to forge a realistic strategy that can take us from today's strife, violence, and insecurities to the point where Israelis, Palestinians and adjacent Arab societies can all live in dignity and self-confidence.

I am convinced more than ever before that a useful means of moving towards this goal is to promote more contacts between Arabs and Israelis — but with one very important provision: That Arabs who travel to Israel should leave behind the bewildering tendency to look at Israelis as either supermen or the devil incarnate. Arab-Israeli encounters are only useful if they promote a more accurate appreciation of the reality of the other side, so that we can address our mutual concerns, dispel our mutual fears and achieve our mutual national goals and rights.

I would guess that the two most enduring character traits that have bedevilled the Arab-Israeli situation in the second half of this century have been the violent racism of modern political Zionism and the state of Israel, and the political and cultural inferiority complex of most Arabs who have had to deal with the Israeli reality.

The violent, racist nature of modern Zionism is perhaps understandable and even inevitable from the post-Holocaust perspective of the Jewish people; if someone had systematically tried to kill several million Palestinians and wipe out any trace of Palestinian culture, it is possible that the surviving Palestinians would have resorted to blind militarism that would have trampled on the national rights of other people who stood in the way of Palestinian survival. If something is understandable, however, this does not mean that it is acceptable — and the institutionalised, racist militarism of Israel is clearly unacceptable to the entire world as a permanent feature of the Levantine landscape.

My most striking impression of what I encountered and saw in Israel was in response to the Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, and the Israeli settlers and tourists who travelled around the West Bank in armed convoys and buses. At a rest stop along the road just north of Jericho, we saw a group of

Israelis who were accompanied by armed policemen and soldiers. My reaction was one of deep sadness for them.

The one word that kept coming to my mind as I watched the settlers and Israeli civilians, and saw the settlements ringed by barbed wire fences and security systems, was: Pathetic. How pathetic are these people, who have built their own prisons and called them settlements, and who have given the world a new and macabre concept: Mobile tourist prisons. I looked at Israelis whose lives are physically and psychologically defined by guns and I felt sadness for them in their new, self-made captivity.

These are good people, I said to myself, who have turned themselves into pitiful people, because they have allowed their Jewish lives and identity to be defined by the tormenting ghosts of anti-Jewish racism they suffered at the hands of predominantly Christian Europeans. How pathetic, I thought, that in the name of religious nationalism and the morality that they believed God passed to the world through Abraham, Moses and themselves, that they should end up like this: Not only captives of their own emotional frenzy, but also convicts in their own barbed wire-ringed camps.

Other than the lamentable dehumanisation of their mournful militarism, the reality of Zionist life in the occupied West Bank is most characterised by the sheer power of its glaring, antiquated colonialism. How sad, I kept thinking, that in the name of their own freedom and safety many Zionist Jews had easily and sometimes even proudly resorted to the colonial militarism of the last century. Are Jews proud that they are the world's last colonial settlers, (mostly) white boys carrying guns and spending their day asking (mostly) dark Arabs to show their identification cards?

I looked for Jews or Israelis in the West Bank without guns and I did not run into many. I wondered what Abraham and Moses would have thought of their people in this sad condition. But I also knew that these violent people and this corrosive racism were not necessarily the last word of the Jews. I knew that Jews could create better, more humane and compassionate societies than the fortified camps in occupied Palestine.

In Israel itself, a rather different picture emerges. The militarism is still there — soldiers all over the place, but not, in fact, very different from the martial nature of most modern Arab capitals, where uniformed and ununiformed security personnel are a deeply entrenched feature of the modern landscape.

Travelling through Israel was a complex but also heartening experience for me. I was impressed by some of the positive aspects of Israeli society — the European urbanism, the legal system, the social benefits and other such things. For Jews, Israel offered many good things. For

Israeli Arabs, Israel offered the tantalising promise of good things, but the reality that Arabs could only partially fulfil their aspirations — for Israel remains, in its own self-image, a Jewish state in which Jews have superior rights. This is not officially stated, but it is an obvious reality of life. It may also be understandable from a Zionist perspective, but like any aspect of institutionalised racism, it is equally untenable in the long run.

Despite the glaring inequities of occupation and the second class quality of the citizenship of Arab-Israelis, the dominant feeling I had in Palestine and Israel was that I would not allow myself to fall into the same emotional, militaristic and racistist quagmire that most Israelis had succumbed to. I would not blindly hate the Israelis and seek to kill them, merely as an expression of my political denial and communal suffering. I would not build my own armed camps. I would not travel in armed convoys in my own ancestral land. I would not deny my humanity in favour of a crazed resort to the false protection of a gun. I would find a better way than Zionism did to assert my personal humanity, my communal dignity and my national and political rights.

The quest for mutual coexistence and national rights between Arabs and Israelis cannot totally ignore the pain and rights abuses of the past and the present; but neither can it succumb to them as the primary determinants of our political psychology and strategic policy-making. The whole point of making peace is to generate the human capacity not only to negotiate a satisfactory conclusion to mutual material or political claims against one another, but also to forge a psychological reconciliation that transcends and truly buries the deep wounds of the past.

I sensed in Israel that this was possible, as I had always thought, and I felt more convinced than ever before that the most effective way to reach this goal is to develop more people-to-people contacts between Israelis and Arabs — non-racist contacts in which people can relate to each other as spiritual and demographic partners in our ancient and blessed homeland. This will take a long time to happen, but I believe that we are on that road, and that successes will come in an incremental, gradual manner.

On the surface, Israel is a technologically advanced European culture from which we can learn and absorb many positive features — but meaningful interaction between us can only occur when the racist discrimination and petty apartheid-like humiliations are removed from the equation. Beneath the surface, Israel is fundamentally a Levantine, Semitic society which makes its racism so much more painful for us to grasp and endure. As the peace process makes progress, I anticipate a continued orientalisation of Israeli society and a Levantisation of Zionism: Like all

other foreign cultures that imposed themselves on our region, Zionism also will slowly succumb to the tremendous absorptive power of our Arab/Islamic/Semitic culture in which Muslims, Christians and Jews are founding corporate partners.

Israel's official acceptance in this region will relax and ultimately remove the racist and colonial barriers that now demean us both. The pathetic Zionist settler mentality will have to succumb to the more enlightened attitude of the majority of Israelis. We on the Arab side, people and governments alike, have to make an important decision: Do we look at Israel and see only the sadness and almost sadistic savagery of the soldier-settlers, these oddball relics of 19th century European colonial savagery who stand out in the entire world like embarrassing freaks? Or do we summon the maturity and power of our Arab-Islamic culture and look deeper into the soul of Israeli society, there to seek out and touch a different reality?

These are difficult issues to deal with, tough questions to ask. But they cannot be avoided very much longer. We would look very foolish indeed if we tried to deal with the reality of Israel only by deferring to the false pride of the loser: That history will avenge our losses and humiliations, that future generations will redeem our spiritual well-being and national integrity.

Israel is neither superhuman nor the devil incarnate. It is a society of individuals who, like ourselves, have been subjected to historical wrongs and sufferings, but who, unlike ourselves, have responded with diligence, sacrifice, initiative and a capacity to work together for the common good. We made many mistakes earlier this century in not dealing with the threat and ebullience of Zionism in a rational and effective manner. We stand at a potential turning point today where history may be offering us an opportunity to once again redraw the map of this region, and address the needs and rights of all its people. We would be very childish to respond with the same emotional excesses, nationalist bombast, domestic political incompetence and diplomatic weaknesses that have defined the Arab predicament for most of this century.

The exact, complex nature of Israeli society and the possibilities of forging mutually satisfying Arab-Israeli relations stand out as compelling issues that have to be discussed in the Arab World, and between Arabs and Israelis. I returned from Palestine and Israel more convinced than ever before that the promise of peace was both tangible and desirable, but that it could only be achieved by delivering justice to both sides, and justice, in turn, could only be forged through a process of simultaneous human sensitisation to our mutual fears and hopes. The 19th century is almost over. It is time to move into the 20th century, for both Arabs and Israelis.

The View from Academia

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

Teachers and exchange programmes

THERE IS no doubt that exchange programmes, research grants and seminar gatherings, for college and university teachers are quite fundamental to their academic, intellectual and psychological welfare. Indeed more is gained from taking part in a programme abroad than many may think. Though some college and university teachers in the Arab World engage actively and make good use of such international grants and seminars, many do not, for a variety of reasons.

The exchange programmes I am talking about here are (putting aside conferences and short-term employment opportunities) essentially research grants and seminars. The two types of programmes are slightly different, even though they ultimately have much in common. Research grants focus on academic research, which we consider part and parcel of university life. The individual college or university teacher, who is expected to be both an instructor and a researcher, chooses a topic or theme within his/her field of specialty and takes time off (away from administrative and teaching responsibilities which, especially in the case of Arab universities, are time-consuming) to study at length at an academic or research institution abroad equipped with more facilities and resources than the home institution. The whole period of time (usually the summer) is entirely devoted to the study of the theme or topic and to the writing up of the findings.

The seminar entitles a person to read about and discuss a certain theme within the realm of (or within a related reality to) one's specialisation. The interesting thing about seminars, such as the one I am taking part in at the Johns Hopkins University, is that they enable the college or university teacher to meet regularly with colleagues from a number of institutions (10-15) under the supervision of a specialist in the narrow field and exchange opinions about the subject or subjects under focus — a subject which one has always wanted to read about and discuss but somehow never had the chance.

The benefits of research programmes and seminars are manifold.

First and foremost, they deepen one's knowledge of one's specialty. In any discipline and any field, there is something new everyday. One needs to keep up with the new happenings, developments, discoveries, inventions, theories, opinions, etc. Presently, we live in an extremely revisionist age, where (in all disciplines and all fields, the sciences as much as the humanities) academics, scholars, and researchers are revising, reinterpreting and redefining many of the things we take and have taken for granted. A fundamental feature of the nineties is that everything is being deconstructed and reconstructed. We need to be alert to what is happening within our own fields and disciplines.

This is especially important for people from the so-called developing world, i.e. us in the Arab World. One keeps up not only through what one comes across in the seminar or the research project but also through the news, the participants bring with them, the excellent libraries and information resources available, and the projects, other colleagues are involved in. Even though some research is going on in our part of the world, most of it happens abroad.

As we in the Arab World (and one says this with a grain of salt) are more recipient than participant or inventive, even within the realm of our own fields, I am afraid it is a must for us to get involved more actively in gathering abroad than individuals from other nations.

Secondly, they are significant intellectually. The mere fact that one is meeting, throughout the period of one's stay, several new people and several old acquaintances (within one's discipline and outside it) is itself a great plus. In addition to what goes on in the seminar (which is normally of a sophisticated intellectual calibre), much goes on outside. Over lunch, before and after the seminar, in the informal get-togethers and in study rooms, people not only exchange news but also discuss and debate ideas. Such intellectual encounter (be it on political, cultural, economic or other kinds of issues) certainly enriches one's experience and sharpens one's mind. At most of our institutions (unfortunately) not much intellectual challenge is to be found. The teaching itself has obviously its own challenges and rewards, but most of the time it is not intellectually fulfilling.

I believe that teachers ought to make use of exchange programmes. I know, of course, that many people are eager to take part, but the opportunity does not arise. For one thing, grants and seminars are highly competitive and are limited; for another thing, many do not know how and where to apply.

LETTERS

It happened before Bosnia

To the Editor:

THE CHILLING apathy shown by the great majority of the privileged world to the horrors in Bosnia is a sad repeat performance of so many previous occasions when indifference to the suffering of others was the order of the day — be they Palestinians, Bengalis, Argentinians, Cambodians, Biafrans, etc. We would all do well to reflect on the words uttered by the Lutheran Pastor Martin Neimöller in 1939 in Berlin, and strive to strengthen our altruism.

First they came for the Jews.

But I did not speak out.

For I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the Communists.

And I did not speak out.

Because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the trade-unionists.

And I did not speak out.

Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics.

And I did not speak out.

Because I was not a Catholic.

Then they came for me.

And there was no-one left to speak out for me.

Pastor Neimöller was held in Dachau for the opposition to the Nazis. He was sentenced to death for his sentence was due to be carried out and the Pastor spent the rest of his life working for ecumenical and peace movements.

(Princess) Sarvath El Hassan
Amman.

Weekender

July 20, 1995

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Published Every Thursday

SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

Courts bind and diplomats bond, in more ways than one

Having retired or transferred quite a few advisers whom he inherited from his predecessor Abdul Salam Majali, Prime Minister Shorif Zaid Ben Shaker seems to be working on bringing in a new generation of advisers. Such appointments are never easy to predict or explain. But earlier this week the Council of Ministers approved the second appointment in as many months of a new adviser at the prime ministry. He is Musa Jaghbir, who had been director of the Free Zones Corporation (FZC). The first appointment was that of Marzouq Hadid who had worked as director of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development. Mr. Jaghbir's move seems to be connected with the reinstatement, by a binding court decision, of Falah Qudrah to his old job as director of the FZC. Mr. Qudrah was retired by the Majali government last year, but he contested the decision at the Higher Court of Justice and won the case. What else can the government do except accept what the judges rule? It is democracy.

The art of balance: Overlooking the Mediterranean, squeezed into part of a wing of Tel Aviv's Dan Hotel, are Jordanian Ambassador Marwan Muasher and his small but dedicated diplomatic and administrative staff. Despite the tight quarters, mounting papers and excessive humidity, the embassy team (some of whom have been there for nearly eight months) has managed to set up an advanced system of information gathering and dissemination, and visa processing, while the ambassador juggles sensitive diplomatic issues, interviews with the press, and courtesy visits by well-wishing Palestinians, Jordanians and Israelis, and friends, which is how we obtained our first-hand look at his operations. Most recently, a group of 20 men from an Arab village crowded into Dr. Muasher's 3m X 3m office to pay their respects and show their support. Moved by the visit, Dr. Muasher remarked that his primary aim is to strike a balance in understanding between Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis -- a task that requires extraordinary skill and stamina. Although a new, significantly more spacious site has been located for the embassy, the staff who braved new waters ploughs on with its work undeterred by the swelling wave of duties and responsibilities of Jordan's first embassy in Israel.

Diplomacy lives: Well-wishers turned out en masse Monday evening to the Hussein Youth City where Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Nuri Al Weiss was celebrating Iraq's national day. Not only senior officials, but also people from all walks of life were noticeably higher in number than in more recent years. According to one newspaper report, 300 guests were invited, but an independent eyewitness estimated those present to be at least 1,000. The courtyard, which is considerably large, was nearly bursting with cars that on the best count numbered more than 300, the eyewitness maintained. Those who went inside were thus a good 1,000. They included Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kobari, Speaker of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament Ahmad Lawzi and Saad Havel Srour, Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Qassem, Senator and former Prime Minister Zaid Rifat and his wife Muna, Senator Abdul Mojeed Shoman, and Jordan Press Association President Suleiman Qadah. The degree of warm hand-shakes and genuine smiles observed that evening seemed to indicate a perhaps more sober trend in the delicate world of inter-Arab rapport.

Enter stage right: Just returned from "Down Under" is Edwina Issa, head of performing arts at the New English School, after representing Jordan at the second International Drama and Theatre in Education (IDEA) World Drama Congress, hosted in Brisbane, Australia -- a significant debut for theatre in the Kingdom. Ms. Issa was one of 1,200 delegates to attend the conference focusing on the issue of theatre as part of an educational curriculum. Jordan, as it turned out, was the only Middle Eastern country represented at the congress. "Jordan has made terrific strides in theatre and education," says Ms. Issa, who has been active in theatre education in Jordan since 1983 and is currently working with the Ministry of Education to draft a syllabus for theatre in education. "Only two years ago did we allow theatre to be part of an education curriculum, but we are already this year writing a syllabus for it." The proof of Jordan's dramatic strides revealed itself in the final act of IDEA congress: Ms. Issa was elected Vice President of the G.M.C. of IDEA, the largest body in the world concerned with theatre and education. We applaud Ms. Issa on her appointment and may she face many a standing ovation for her contributions to theatre in Jordan from "down under" to up top.

Spatial longings: Congratulations are in order as well to a friend and colleague, Abdul Mojib Asfour, managing editor of Al Rai Arabic daily, on his recent appointment as Amman city councillor. It is expected that Mr. Asfour will seek to join Ms. Issa in top-billing Jordan's cultural environment. Mr. Asfour is the first from our ranks to be appointed to a city service position. While he comes from a family tradition of business and civil service, Mr. Asfour insists that it is most likely that he was appointed on the basis of his personal character. But it may also be because he has a rather "spiritual" platform. "I want to revive the soul of Amman," he says simply. At the top of his agenda is giving people more space. "People need more room to be creative. We need theatres for children... more places for artists to exhibit their works and for people to appreciate them... adequate (city) space to work, relax and enjoy. I want to give more emphasis and attention to the creative aspects of city living," he says, "not just building infrastructure."

Weekend warriors: They are promoting it as "Just another practice game," but tradition indicates otherwise. It is probably more likely that the Britons and the Aussies will be shedding blood for victory during a cricket match to be

banished out Friday on the grounds of the Royal Riding Stables. The event, called rather burningly, "Desert Ashes," is sponsored by the British and Australian embassy clubs and the Marriott Hotel and commences at approximately (you know how these things go) 3:30 p.m., is a first for the two friendly (?) rivals. But according to Martin Cronin, second secretary of economics and information at the British embassy, both parties hope to see it become an annual event. "The Australians suggested the idea, and we gladly accepted," he says. He adds that the match will be a big event -- "possibly the match of the century" reads one promotional flyer. Mr. Cronin says he "has a feeling that Pakistani Ambassador Sarwar Naqvi, an admitted cricket fan, will be presenting the trophy to the winners." The British embassy is hoping that an invitation to Friday's affair may inspire His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and the Royal Palace to accept a long-standing invitation put forth by British Ambassador Peter Hinchcliffe to take part in a British Embassy v. the Hashemite Palace challenge. We just wonder if what is holding back the Palace contenders is the dress code of cricket whites.

Make a note: With the "temporary" closure of the Outback Bar at the Australian embassy, the British embassy apparently felt the need to assume responsibility for the sure-to-be-missed Thursday evening entertainment spearheaded by Brian Pullen who has left his Amman post to Canberra. The British substitute will be open through the summer, say embassy staff members and will serve the diplomatic core. But, according to "watering hole" know-it-alls, anyone can partake of the British Isles-style revelry upon invitation by embassy club members or by simply ringing up the embassy in advance of the weekend and requesting that his/her name be pencilled into the guest list. Now that that is settled, any suggestions for what to name the flagship hot spot?

Stepping back in time: If the visual arts are more your cup of tea, then consider stepping back in time and taking a seat at the partly restored Roman theatre at Umm Qais where only a month ago the Norwegian embassy organised a sunset opera event that reincarnated the stage after nearly 2,000 years. Riding on the success of that evening the organisers of the Jerash Festival and proprietor of Romero's Restaurant Zaid Goussous will light the torches for a one-night presentation of an opera recital by famous Polish baritone Krzysztof Borystewicz. Mr. Borystewicz will be accompanied on piano by Katarzyna Jankowska next Wednesday

evening. The following Monday, the theatre will be host to "Drum and Dance" performance by the Guem Group of France, who will move to a mix of Western and African rhythms. Preparing for such events is not without complications -- the Romans certainly must have had it easier -- says Mr. Goussous. He recalls that for the Norwegian opera night, part of a week of "Encounters" between Norwegian and Jordanian performing and visual artists, the piano for the opera recital had to be brought in by crane and wiring for the lighting system was stretched 300 metres from the Umm Qais Resthouse to the theatre. Still some most unexpected, yet charming, interruptions made of strange encounters of another kind, including a cow which mooed and a shepherd in a nearby olive grove who intermittently added his own accompaniment of "Yal Leil, Ya El'ni" to one of Norway's top opera stars high Cs during the actual performance. With that rural experience under his belt, Mr. Goussous is more concerned with an unpredictable summer evening shower, and will certainly have his eye out for an unwitting goat making its way to the salad bar. Both events are to be followed by a gala dinner at the Resthouse. And if you are one to do things in threes, you can mark Aug. 2 on your calendar for a musical recital by Italian pianist Alberto Pomeranz at Mount Nebo, followed again by a gala dinner covered by none other than Italian cuisine artisans from Romero's.

In the wild blue yonder:

When Omar Bilal is in the "driver's seat" the sky's the limit. This high-flying member of the Royal Falcons, the national air acrobatics club, won the Bridling Cup last week for the best performance in the free-flying round of the Big Thunder Air Show in the U.K. Upon hearing of Captain Bilal's success, His Majesty King Hussein, often seen at the throttle himself, rang up Royal Jordanian President Nader Dahabi to congratulate him. Captain Bilal and all the Royal Falcons team who are in Europe participating in several annual air shows.



Captain Omar Bilal

Jennifer Hamorn
and
Amy Henderson

In the land of darkness the blind man is king

By John Sanders

Reuters

LONDON -- Visitors to an exhibition on London's South Bank see nothing. Plunged into blackness, the sound of bird song and running water, the scent and touch of trees and a gentle breeze reveal to them a park.

The aim of the exhibition, *Dialogue In The Dark*, is to show sighted people what it feels like to live in a world without visual stimulation.

"The exhibition allows you to begin to see what it's like to be without sight, but not what it's like to be blind... The blindness people experience inside is different from what

you see if you're totally blind," said June Bretherton, manager of the exhibition.

"If you've never seen at all, you see nothing at all, or if you've lost your sight as I have, you see coloured patterns."

Coaxed deftly on by a blind or partially-sighted guide and gingerly sweeping the white sticks issued to them on entry, visitors shuffle in groups of about 10 between the exhibition's four environments.

They are guided from the park across a noisy road, into a home and finally into an eerily quiet bar.

With no sight, simply ordering and paying for a

drink becomes a major challenge. Visitors fumbling for bank notes must rely on the honesty of the blind barman to identify the denomination of the money pulled warily from wallets.

Only when people start talking does the bar assume shape and size, and voices are crucial in negotiating the slalom of unseen tables, chairs, walls and pillars.

"One has to talk or otherwise one doesn't know where everybody else is," said Bretherton, who is also honorary secretary of Britain's Blind Business Association.

Dialogue In The Dark, adapted from a concept developed in Germany, has attracted more than 6,000 visitors since opening on May 4 and is due to run until July 30, having won extra funding from its financial backer British Telecommunications.

The exhibitors aim to have at least three different environments to demonstrate how a blind person experiences the natural world, social situations and urban life. How this has been achieved in the different countries where exhibitions have been staged depends on the designer, said Bretherton.

Visitors to *Dialogue In The Dark* have included tourists, architects, designers, actors, people in the field of visual impairment and those with visually impaired relations who want some inkling of what it is like to be without sight.

As a result of one visit, a mother discovered why her blind son refused to accompany her into the shopping mall.

"One woman stopped off because her son had gone blind and she wanted some sort of idea of what it was like. What came over to her was how loud everything sounds," Bretherton said.

The London exhibition is housed in an area normally reserved for skateboarding.

Elsewhere in Europe stage managers have used a range of venues for the concept.

"In Vienna it's been in a stately home and a sports hall. In Paris a theatre, in Avignon a castle. It's been in museums. It's on a barge in Liege at the moment. In France they're putting it on a train," Bretherton said.

"In Vienna they tried a supermarket. That failed because everyone kept ripping the packets undone."

The exhibition has an unusual effect on some people.

A few take fright at plunging into darkness and refused to go round it,

but Bretherton said most find the experience rewarding.

"Most people are surprised at how quickly they start using their other senses. They find it an almost liberating experience. One man even stripped naked," said Bretherton.

"In a way, because we use our other senses more, we feel we have a richer experience of life than most other people... We feel our lives quite enhanced by not being able to see," she said.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Royal National Institute for the Blind, one of Britain's leading charities for the

visually impaired. Construction cost £100,000 (\$160,000) and the organisers hope that, with the extension until the end of July, it will break even.

As well as opening to the public, *Dialogue In The Dark* runs and educational programme, invites school groups and aims to offer visual impairment awareness training for organisations.

"Its purpose is bridge building and communication... It's about making use of the other senses that we hope other people will continue to use at an increased level when they leave the exhibition," said Bretherton.

Old piazza life feels nudge of modern Italy

By Brian Murphy
The Associated Press

ROME -- After a brawl in a grimy fringe of Rome, police blocked the street and neighbours discussed how a pleasant summer night could turn so steamy with rage.

No jobs, someone said. Another blamed drugs. A man leaned from a window and growled his opinion: No piazza and therefore no soul.

Such comments are now moving beyond just curbside philosophy.

Urban planners around Italy are looking to reclaim the historic role of the piazza, or plaza, where for centuries neighbours have traded gossip,

merchants peddled wares and politicians made promises. The easy gatherings, central to Italian life, have long created a sense of community -- soul, in one man's view, that can alleviate misunderstanding.

At the same time, however, others wonder whether technology and changing habits are sapping the traditional purpose for piazzas, leaving them attractive anachronisms like gas lamps and horse carriages.

"The idea of the piazza is not dead, but it's ailing," said Mario Isnenghi, a University of Venice history professor and author of a recent book on the

evolution of the piazza. Isnenghi's research funnels into one central question: Is there space for the old piazza culture in a contemporary Italy of supermarkets, cellular phones and round-the-clock television?

"I'm not trying to be pessimistic, but we've already seen some losses," said Isnenghi.

The withdrawal of politicians from the piazza to the TV studio has been one of the most noticeable changes. As recently as the mid-1980s, political groups held giant outdoor rallies as their main way to reach out to voters. Now, the small screen is the preferred forum. And many piazzas have

seen better days, left to become parking lots.

But the piazza hasn't been completely snubbed. Labour groups still pack squares when they're looking to make a point. An estimated 1 million people marched through a central Rome piazza in November to denounce proposed pension cuts.

At night, teenagers career their motorbikes through campo Di Fiori, the hot piazza of the moment for pre-disco gatherings in Rome. One of Italy's most recent television programmes was a karaoke songfest that travelled to piazzas around the country. And tourists are forever

drawn to the most picturesque of them, to eat gelato and look on Bernini's fountains in Rome's Piazza Navona, feed pigeons in the enormous Piazza San Marco in Venice or stroll along Florence's Piazza Della Signoria outside the Uffizi Museum.

What trend mavens are watching, however, are the times between the shouts of protesters and the squeal of Vespa motorbikes. They worry about leisure time increasingly moving from the piazza to the living room couch.

"I wouldn't declare the piazza a thing of the past, but the 'virtual piazza' of TV is a powerful force,"

said Ezio Genovesi, a Rome architect. Italy's surge into affluence also strikes at the simple ideals of the piazza.

The millions of new cars purchased since the 1970s need spaces -- and many piazzas are now fancy parking lots with fountains and Baroque trimmings. And with cars comes mobility: To American-style supermarkets rather than the piazza food stalls or to country homes on weekends instead of cooling off outside with neighbours.

Gianni Panni tipped his chair back on its back legs and watched the Saturday night crowd in a piazza in

Rome's old Trastevere section. A group of tourists passed by eating ice cream.

Panni, 72, chomped on a watermelon and spit the seeds on the cobblestones. He recalled how he and his neighbours filled the piazza until late on summer night. Many of his old friends have died. Younger residents appear to have other ways to spend their time.

"I feel like a ghost," he said.

This type of nostalgia gives hope to piazza preservationists.

Rome's mayor, Francesco Rutelli, has ordered a design contest to spruce up 100 piazzas around the city.

In Perugia, planners are trying to restore five rundown piazzas on the edge of the city.

A New York researcher, Michelle Lafoe, believes the traditions of the piazza are rooted strong enough to withstand the tug of progress.

"Sure, there is E-mail, TV, VCRs and everything else that distracts from what the piazza is all about," said Lafoe, who is working on a doctoral dissertation of piazzas.

"But what I've seen is that the piazza is still a source of information and human interaction that still has no equal. There's nothing like face-to-face contact."

Connery's career thrives — always in Bond's shadow

By Matt Spetalnick
Reuter

HOLLYWOOD — He has thrilled audiences for decades playing everything from Kings and swashbucklers to cops and robbers.

But even with the passage of 33 years, the role that first made Sean Connery a screen legend is one

he's never been able to shake. Balding, gray and weathered, he is still for many the once and forever James Bond.

Now, at age 64, the veteran actor who once fought to escape the shadow of Secret Agent 007 is learning to take it all in stride.

"It's really very flattering," he said in a recent

interview. "If you do the first of something and if it's successful, it's difficult for somebody to follow."

Indeed Connery was a tough act to follow, and for those who have tried to fill Bond's shoes — Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton and the next-generation 007 Pierce Brosnan — he has plenty of sympathy.

Even when they do it well, he said, people often dismiss it as a foolproof role or say "yeah, but he's not as good as Sean Connery."

Now Connery is about to hit the big screen as a legend of a different order — King Arthur of Camelot. In the Columbia Pictures release *First Knight*, he plays the ageing monarch to Julia Ormond's Lady Guinevere and Richard Gere's Lancelot.

As a remake of the Camelot myth, *First Knight* — which opens across the United States Friday — is sure to offend Arthurian purists. Merlin the magician and Arthur's trusty sword Excalibur are missing. Lancelot is not a selfless nobleman but a rootless rogue who goes wherever his sword leads him — in this case, into the arms of the beautiful Guinevere.

Guessing how his countrymen will react, British actor Ben Cross, who plays the villainous knight Malagant, said: "The usual thing will be 'oh God, Lancelot played by



Sean Connery with Audrey Hepburn in the film *Robin and Marian*

an American, but wasn't Sean wonderful."

But Connery defends the decision to break away from the commonly told Arthurian tales, saying "it makes the story easier to understand in human terms."

The baritone-voiced Scot was the first choice for the man who would be king, turning down offers to appear in two other summer swashbucklers, *Rob Roy* and *Braveheart*.

On the set, Connery clearly struck awe in his fellow cast members.

"He's an intimidating presence," said director Jerry Zucker. "You see Sean approaching and your lips start to form the words 'yes.'"

Though Connery has since won critical acclaim in many demanding roles, it was Bond who made him an international movie icon — a status he sometimes found stifling.

In 1962, he beat out bigger names to play Ian Fleming's dashing secret agent in *Dr. No* and was soon setting box-office records.

But before the series could become a trap, he dropped out. That kicked off a second career as he branched out into other roles, starring in *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975), *The Wind and The Lion* (1975), *Robin and Marian* (1976) and *A Bridge Too Far* (1977).

Then in 1983 Connery donned his toupee and returned to play an over-the-hill 007 in *Never Say Never Again*. Four years later, he won an Oscar for his supporting role as a grizzled Irish cop in *The*



Sean Connery stands in front of his photo portraying James Bond

Untouchables.

Though he is just shy of the age that qualifies him for a free bus pass in his native Scotland, Connery has never been busier. *Premiere* magazine recently ranked him the 15th most powerful actor in Hollywood.

Secure in his reputation as an A-list actor, Connery says he has stopped

worrying about being stereotyped in the 007 mould. "If I found a really interesting part that had a parallel to Bond, I would certainly do it," he insisted.

As for talk that he may someday play Bond's father, he said: "Nobody has ever made an overture to me... I would adore to do it."



Sean Connery plays King Arthur of Camelot in the film *First Knight*

Moscow Film Festival attracts Hollywood glitterati

By Marina Lapenkova

Agence France Presse MOSCOW — The Moscow International Film Festival, once a showpiece for Communist Party apparatchiks, is being billed this year as a window on the new Russia, with politics kept to a minimum.

"Russia's desire to maintain its prestige as a premier film-making country will cost it a sum comparable to the Cannes festival," said the 19th Moscow festival's director, Alexander Atanesian, a former col-

league of the celebrated Armenian filmmaker Sergei Parajanov.

The Russian authorities are spending between \$7 and \$8 million on the festival, opening Monday. Another 17 million will go on refurbishing Russia's cinemas, which are generally in a chronic state of disrepair, Atanesian said.

In a sign of the authorities' commitment to Russia cinema, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin is chairing the organising committee — the first such appointment in the festival's history. He is

flanked by major figures in modern Russian cinema: Nikita Mikhalkov, Andrei Konchalovsky, Sergei Solovtsev and Leonid Pashulin.

Launched in 1959, the festival was traditionally a showpiece for Soviet leaders to parade their values in the world spotlight. It was characterised by a proliferation of films from developing countries and propaganda events such as mass flag-waving by thousands of young Communists.

In the Soviet era the guests were accommo-

dated in the gloomy labyrinth of the Stalinist Hotel Rossiya.

But this year Moscow will play host to some of the glitterati of world cinema, including Hollywood heart-throb Richard Gere, who is chairing the festival's international jury.

The luxury Metropol and Savoy hotels will also provide sumptuous rooms for star actresses Whoopi Goldberg and Meryl Streep, Italian scriptwriter Tonino Guerro and actors Maximilian Schell, Michele Placido and Klaus Maria Brandauer.

Goldberg plays a non-comic role in the politically-correct *Boys on the Side*, featuring in the festival.

Brandauer's *Mario And The Magician* will also be among the 22 films competing for the prestigious and unprecedented \$50,000 Grand Prize, awarded to the director and producer of the best film.

French cult director Agnes Varda will attend a retrospective of her films. Filmmakers from the former Soviet republics will stay at the less chic Ukraine and Moscow

hotels, but all are invited to join a two-day boar-hunt and feast in Nizhny Novgorod on the Volga.

Muscovites will have the chance to rub shoulders with the rich and famous in a big marquee pitched outside the Metropol, next to a granite statue of Karl Marx, for an entry fee of 30,000 rubles (\$7).

"More democracy, less pomp — everything will be open to the public apart from the judges' room," said Atanesian. Gere will be flanked on the jury by a dozen other

stars of world cinema, including the Czech director Jiri Menzel and Georgian Otar Iosseliani, and the American cameraman Laszlo Kovacs.

The other prizes will also be the highest ever to be awarded at the Moscow festival.

The Special Jury Prize, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Actress will each total \$20,000.

The festival will end on July 28 with a big party on the banks of the Moskva River and a release of balloons bearing the portraits of former cinema

idols.

However, the glitziness of this year's festival is not to everybody's taste. "It's a disgrace, I don't want to be there," commented film critic Genrikh Vartanov of Russia's Fine Arts Institute.

"Instead of helping Russian cinema they are putting on this circus."

According to Daniil Dandurei, chief editor of *Cinema Art*, the main Russian cinema magazine, the authorities "want to recreate a big Soviet-style event but with a different ideological spin."

Mona Lisa's smile — do wrinkles fuel the mystery?

By John Follain

Reuter

PARIS — The enigmatic smile of Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa has become more mysterious as she gets older, according to an expert on the Italian painter.

French art historian Jacques Franck says cracks around the eyes and mouth in the early 16th

century panel had changed the Mona Lisa's expression in the world's most famous painting.

"I don't think Leonardo wanted her to have such a mocking expression. The expression he gave her was a much more serene one," said Franck, a consultant to Paris's Louvre Museum where the Mona Lisa is the star attraction.

Attempts to solve the Mona Lisa enigma have included various theories, including the one that she had overlapping teeth or another that asserted she was really a very tall man.

One Californian doctor concluded she suffered from Bell's palsy, a form of facial paralysis causing a contraction of muscles around the corners of the

mouth.

Many of the cracks Franck points to are visible only close-up, but Leonardo's work is particularly vulnerable to them because of his subtle pictorial technique in minute tonal shifts, modelling and shading.

The cracks are most striking around the right eye. Tracking the eyelid,

they make the eye appear longer and turn her gaze into a very slight squint.

Cracks under the left eyelid, around the outside of both cheeks, and at one corner of her mouth also help to redraw the model's expression and give her a more pronounced smile.

"The right pupil appears to be more towards the inside of the

eye, giving her a slightly more insistent gaze," said Franck, who has published his findings in the American scientific review *Academia Leonardi Vinci*.

"The smile has changed. There is more gaiety in her smile than Leonardo originally painted. The cracks have made her slightly less

beautiful and perhaps more interesting," he added.

Franck said he could not tell whether the cracks were in the preparation of the panel or in the layer of paint.

Could Leonardo, a scientist and inventor as well as an artist whose experiments revolutionised painting style, himself

have engineered the change in the Mona Lisa's expression as a show of bravura for generations centuries later?

"We can't say for sure. We need to know which layer the cracks are in. But Leonardo often re-touched work when the paint was not quite dry, and that could make for cracks," Franck said.

Young director makes promising first film, and worries

By Hillel Italie

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — If you could photograph the soul of director James Gray you might get something like this scene on the boardwalk at Brighton Beach, where dark clouds hang like fate over the water and sad-eyed men wear hats and speak in Russian.

The 26-year-old filmmaker has come out to this ethnic enclave of Brooklyn to promote his debut feature, *Little Odessa*. He is standing near a wooden railing, wondering if he broke into the business too soon, if he'll even get to make another movie.

"You never know when it's going to be your last film. Maybe people are going to hate it, no one's going to give you money any more," he says. It's a product of West-

ern culture that you are taught to believe you'll get better, that technology will lead us to a better future. The truth is, with movies, with art, the creative force's progress is not inevitable. You could get worse as a filmmaker. Who knows when you peak?"

So far, Gray seems destined to stick around. He completed *Little Odessa* with a minimum of interference, and worked with a cast that included Academy Award winners Vanessa Redgrave and Maximilian Schell, along with Tim Roth, Edward Furlong and Moira Kelly.

Reviews have been strong, with the *New York Times* saying *Little Odessa* suggests the start of a "powerful career." While that film was released by Fine Line Features, Gray has an upcoming, two-picture deal with 20th

Century Fox.

"If they read my next script and they think it's junk, forget it," he counters. "Look, you can have someone write you a contract, which is like you have final cut and total control, and this, that, or the other thing. But if they want to, they can always screw you."

Such angst you could say this intense, articulate man is simply honouring the tradition of his Russian Jewish ancestors, but you also could credit him for seeing caution as the best way to sustain his lucky streak.

The son of college professors, Gray didn't grow up in Brighton Beach, but nearby in Queens. He remembers being a serious kid ("especially when the Yankees lost") who upon seeing *Apocalypse Now* decided movies were no longer "nifty," but "awesome."

He was so hooked on cinema that he would skip classes to go to the theatre, and he made the sensible choice to attend film school, at the University of Southern California.

"After he graduated from USC, we saw a short film which he directed, which was really, really good," said Gray's agent, John Leshner. "We all thought he would be someone exciting to represent."

"He likes to play computer games, but there is something not entirely of this era about him, in a good way. He seemed like a renaissance man trapped in a 22-year-old body. He can paint, he knows about philosophy and art. He's a very intelligent guy."

Gray does find himself longing for the past, for the 1960s and '70s. In those days, he believes,

you didn't have to apologise for being a liberal and you didn't have to sell out completely to get Hollywood to make one of your movies.

The director is from the school, let's call it the old school, that believes a badly made feature with a happy ending is far more depressing than a good film that tells a tragic story.

Little Odessa, he hopes, belongs in the latter category: You certainly couldn't mistake it for *Forrest Gump*. Reflecting Gray's love for *Mean Streets*, *Rocco And His Brothers* and other films from the '60s and '70s *Little Odessa* tells a grim story about violence and family tension among immigrants in Brighton Beach.

It's fun to hear the director tell how he got all those actors for *Little Odessa*, especially since

he mimics their voices so perfectly.

Roth was the first to join (they once had the same agent), and the others soon followed. Gray's best story concerns Schell, whose droning Viennese accent provides an almost macabre atmosphere.

"We decided to send him the script and he called up the casting director and said, 'the script is very interesting. I want to meet with the director.' So, I flew out to Los Angeles for the day, and went to Max's house, where he greeted me in his bathrobe and a scarf," Gray recalled.

"I went into his office, which had like hundreds of cassette tapes all around. I went over every page of the screenplay. It took seven hours. He just wanted to make sure I had thought his part

through entirely. And after seven hours, he still hadn't committed."

"I went back to New York with no answer. He called me up a week later, at about 3 in the morning, and said, 'James Earl Gray?' — That's what he called me, James Earl Gray — 'I will not abandon you.'"

Little Odessa stars Roth as a hitman who returns secretly, on business, to his native Brighton Beach. But he ends up encountering his father (Schell), an unassimilated Russian Jew who calls him a "murderer"; his adoring younger brother (Furlong) and his dying mother (Redgrave).

Gray's older brother is not a mobster, but the director did use a lot of details from his personal life. He says Schell's character is almost a direct copy of his own grandfather and Redgrave's role

is very much based on his mother, who died of cancer six years ago.

"Some things were personal, some things I read in the *New York Times*. It was a weird sort of amalgamation," he said.

"This may sound incredibly pretentious, but I wanted to make something that was the modern equivalent to those elegiac Greek tragedies... That was a result of the stuff I liked to see as a kid, which were European movies and American films from the early '70s."

"I wanted to make a movie that was the opposite of every cheesy crime movie and hipsterism. It's so offensive to watch a movie where people are getting killed and it's about the seedy underbelly, but it's made by somebody who has no clue about that, and it's all superficial."

Doctors agonise over new ability to predict cancer decades ahead

By Paul Raeburn
The Associated Press

JANET didn't need a doctor to tell her something was wrong.

For more than a decade, she had watched as breast cancer stalked her family. Her mother was diagnosed in 1978, at the age of 47. Her aunt was struck a year later. The aunt's 29-year-old daughter was next, then another daughter, then one of Janet's sisters.

The two cousins and the sister died, and in 1992, the shadow fell on Janet. She, too, had breast cancer. She was 40 years old.

By then, Janet's sister Susan — four years younger and free of any sign of disease — could not stand waiting for what she viewed as the inevitable. She decided to do the only thing she could to avoid the tragedy that had befallen her mother, aunt, cousins and sisters: She scheduled surgery to have both her healthy breasts removed.

Janet and Susan — who used assumed names to protect their privacy — told their story last fall to several hundred geneticists and researchers gathered in Montreal for the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics.

As Janet began, the audience fell silent. The sorrow in her voice filled the cavernous hall, where doctors and researchers were beginning to grapple with a problem unlike any they had faced before.

Last year, the mystery behind the shadow that fell on the women of Janet's family was solved. Researchers identified the gene causing the breast cancer in families like hers.

But the discovery did little to lift the shadow. Instead, it brought with it a fearsome power. For the first time, doctors could predict, decades in advance, which members of those families would get cancer and which would not.

Within weeks of the discovery, Susan became one of the first women to undergo testing. Only days before the scheduled surgery to remove her breasts, doctors notified her of the results: She did not carry the breast cancer mutation.

That meant her risk of developing breast cancer was normal — not astronomical, as it would be if she carried the gene. She cancelled the surgery.

"I couldn't believe it," Susan said. "It was the first reason we had for

hope."

For many others, however, including other women in Janet's and Susan's family, doctors have only bad news. Many of those women are carrying "genetic markers" indicating they have the mutation. And doctors can do nothing to help them.

Some day, it may be possible to pluck out harmful genetic mutations, to "cure" bad genes. In the meantime, doctors who have identified patients at risk can only watch helplessly as their fates unfold.

"There's that quote from Sophocles — it is but sorrow to be wise, when wisdom profits nothing," said Dr. Francis Collins, the director of genetics research at the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Collins directs the National Centre for Human Genome Research, an ambitious effort to identify all the estimated 100,000 genes in humans — including an unknown number of cancer genes.

Last year, researchers discovered genes that make it possible to identify the individuals at risk in families ravaged by colon cancer. More such genes are sure to follow, Dr.

Collins said.

"These genes for cancer are getting cloned willy-nilly. Testing would have potential benefits if we knew what to recommend. But we don't."

A few years ago, doctors found the gene for Huntington's disease, a crippling and ultimately fatal nerve disorder that killed folk singer Woody Guthrie. They are close to finding a genetic indicator of Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. Collins is among many geneticists who see a crisis building. Pressure to make testing available is coming not only from patients like Janet and Susan, but also from biotechnology companies, which stand to make a fortune selling test kits.

This new ability to predict cancer raises a host of vexing scientific and ethical questions. How should the tests be interpreted outside the research lab? Should testing be offered to anyone? What kind of psychological support should be provided?

Cancer testing also is likely to have a disastrous impact on patients' health insurance. Insurance companies may drop coverage for people carrying cancer genes. And as the ability to test for such genes grows, the pool of people

excluded from coverage could grow.

"We are all carrying around pre-existing conditions, and we're learning more about how to find them," Dr. Collins said. "Pretty soon, we're all going to be uninsurable."

A further problem is that the government hasn't decided what it should do to assure the accuracy of the new gene tests and ensure they aren't misused.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the authority to regulate genetic tests, but has not exercised it so far. Companies promoting the tests have not been submitting them to the FDA for approval, the National Academy of Sciences warned in a 1993 report.

The emotional consequences of testing can be so overwhelming that the tests must be nearly 100 per cent accurate, the academy said. At present, they aren't.

Mary-Claire King, a geneticist at the University of California in Berkeley, did the groundbreaking work leading to the discovery of the breast cancer gene. Breast cancer runs in Ms. King's family, as it does in Janet's and Susan's.

Few people understand

the significance of the test and its implications better than Ms. King. And she has decided not to take it.

"I have not screened myself. I have not screened my daughter," she said. "It is premature now. The information is of no use."

The genetic link to breast cancer in her family is weaker than in Janet's and Susan's family. In Ms. King's family, the tests might not provide conclusive information on risks.

Many other families are in similar circumstances. Few families are hit as hard as Janet's and Susan's, so Ms. King pleaded with women in those families to wait before seeking testing. "Give us time to sort out the biology," she said.

When the biology is sorted out over the next few years, testing may become routine. But that in turn will create another problem. Genetic testing does not produce yes or no answers. The results are expressed in terms of probabilities.

In Janet's and Susan's family, the probability for any individual woman is either very high or very low, making the results relatively simple to understand. But what happens

when a woman has a slightly elevated probability of getting breast cancer, or double the usual risk? What if a young man is told he is at high risk of getting Alzheimer's disease in his 60s?

There will be an urgent need for genetic counselors, professionals who can interpret test results and provide guidance. Dr. Collins imagined what might happen in the absence of such counseling: "A patient comes in and says 'I lost my keys last week, and I can't remember this person's name. Am I getting Alzheimer's?'"

"And the physician says, 'let's do this test.' And he says, 'yeah, you've got it. We better test your kids.'"

"And some of them have it..."

"And one of them goes out and blows his brains out."

Add up the number of Americans at risk of breast cancer, colon cancer and Alzheimer's disease, and the numbers reach the tens of millions. But there are now only 1,200 genetic counselors in the United States, and Dr. Collins said the few training programmes are short of funds and unable to expand.

That inevitably leaves

doctors and nurses to fill the gap, even though many of them may have little genetic training.

"We have to move very swiftly if we're going to prepare physicians and nurses for this," Dr. Collins said.

Even the limited use of the tests thus far has revealed surprises in the way patients react. When Susan learned she was free of the genetic marker for breast cancer, her worries should have been over. Yet the good news proved to be almost as difficult to handle as bad news would have been.

First, she felt anger — "for the hell my sisters had been through." Then a pervasive guilt seeped in, and remains.

"I keep thinking, 'why did they inherit it and I didn't? They're good people.' I'm the only one out of five children that didn't inherit the marker. The next day I remember not being able to get out of bed."

Janet concluded her remarks to the geneticists with a word of thanks — and a hope.

"We as a family feel tremendously grateful that something has been happening for us," she said.

"I wish you all a lot of luck in figuring this out."

Study disputes link between breast cancer and Estrogen

By Lindsey Tanner

The Associated Press
CHICAGO — What's a menopausal woman to believe? Less than a month after researchers reported that taking Estrogen may increase the risk of breast cancer, a new study indicates there's no such danger.

The lead authors of both studies say more research is needed — though both stand by their findings.

"I know there's a lot of

confusion," said University of Washington epidemiologist Janet Stanford, lead author of the new study.

Dr. Stanford said women should discuss their medical history with their doctors before deciding whether to use hormones during menopause.

"It has to be an individual decision," she said. Hormone replacement therapy, using Estrogen alone or with Progesterin, is often prescribed to allevi-

ate the hot flashes and other symptoms of menopause as well as to reduce the risk of heart disease and brittle bones.

Hormone supplements can cut in half the risk of heart disease, the leading cause of death for women as well as men. They have a similar effect on fractures.

Doctors have long suspected that Estrogen, a female sex hormone, may play a role in the development of breast cancer.

Women with longtime exposure to increased Estrogen levels — those who begin menstruating early or go through menopause late — face a higher breast cancer risk.

But doctors have debated for decades whether there is a similar link involving hormones given to women when their natural Estrogen production slows down.

Stanford's study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association,

found that menopausal women who take Estrogen alone or with Progesterin face no increased risk of breast cancer.

The results are based on medical histories of 1,029 Seattle-area women ages 50 to 64. About half had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

"We found no overall association between breast cancer risk and the use of either Estrogen alone or Estrogen with Progesterin," the researchers wrote.

A study published on June 15 in the New Eng-

land Journal of Medicine found that women on hormones for more than five years had a 46 per cent higher risk of breast cancer than those who never used such supplements. The risk dropped to normal within two years of stopping hormone therapy.

The lead author of that study, Dr. Graham Colditz of Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, said Dr. Stanford's research was flawed because it was limited to women under 65.

"When we looked at the

longer-term users and older ages we saw stronger increases in risk," Dr. Colditz said.

Dr. Melody Cobleigh, director of the Comprehensive Breast Centre at Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, said earlier research tends to support Dr. Stanford's findings.

"The preponderance of the evidence is that there is not an association" between breast cancer and hormone supplements, Dr. Cobleigh said.

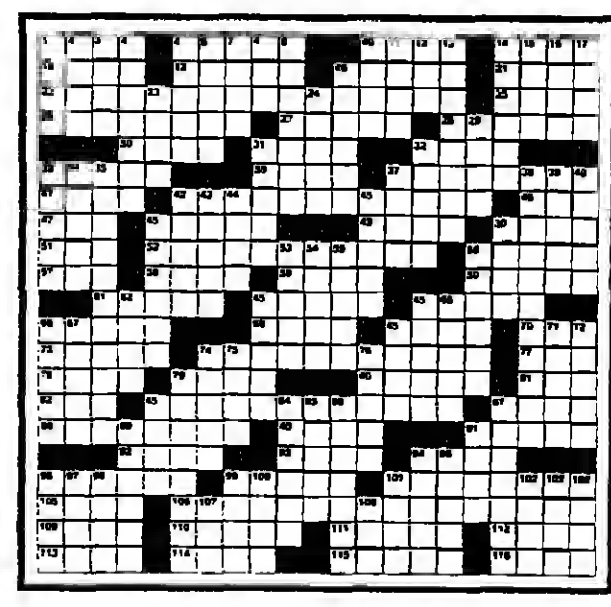
WEEKEND CROSSWORD

THE GANG'S ALL HERE
By Grace Pinkston

ACROSS

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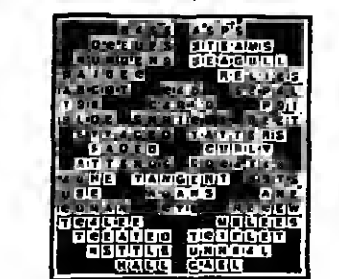
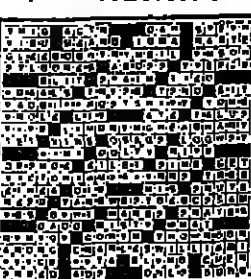
Diagramless, 19 x 19
By Frances Burton

ACROSS

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



University of Toronto discovers Alzheimer's gene

By Sarah Davison
Reuter

TORONTO — A team of researchers from the University of Toronto said it has discovered the gene responsible for the most severe form of the mind-crushing Alzheimer's disease.

The university's Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases said it has identified and cloned the mutations of the gene that causes early onset Alzheimer's disease, a rare but extremely aggressive form of pre-senile dementia that afflicts people aged 30 to 60.

"We have found a new and important piece of the puzzle of Alzheimer's disease," Dr. Peter St. George-Hyslop, the centre's director, said in a press release. The findings were published in the June 29 edition of the Journal Nature.

Environmental factors and genetic predisposition are considered the causes of most forms of the disease, which typically strikes after the age of 65, Dr. St. George-Hyslop said.

At least three and probably four or five genes are involved in inherited susceptibility to the disease, he said. But genetic pre-

disposition is considered the only cause of early onset Alzheimer's, suggesting the University of Toronto discovery is particularly significant.

"We have found a gene that, when it carries genetic mutations, is the sole cause of one type of Alzheimer's disease, and because it is such an aggressive form of Alzheimer's disease it is very likely a fundamental and important step in the biochemical process that causes all types of the disease," Dr. St. George-Hyslop said.

Several years ago, the University of Toronto team began looking at families where Alzheimer's was clearly inherited as a genetic trait. Three years ago, they mapped the gene to a region on Chromosome 14 and then

worked to identify the actual Alzheimer's disease gene and to find the mutations in the gene that cause the disease.

After examining known genes on Chromosome 14 without finding mutations, they started to look for a new gene. Using a specialised cloning technique, they isolated and investigated these new genes for mutations specific for people with Alzheimer's disease.

After looking at 19 new genes, they found one bearing mutations that are found only in people who have Alzheimer's disease.

"... Hopefully with more work we will understand the biochemical processes of Alzheimer's disease," Dr. St. George-Hyslop said. But he cautioned that no cure is around the corner.

Researchers announce new malaria treatment

LONDON (AFP) — British and American researchers have identified a family of genes in malaria parasites that could save the lives of two million children who die of malaria in Africa each year.

"Armed with this new information it will now be possible to investigate new methods of treatment by interfering with the parasite's ability to stick to blood vessels," said Chris Newbold, the physician heading a team of researchers at Oxford University.

"Vaccination is another possibility, which would stimulate the immune system to protect the person against the divergent action of the genes," he said in the current issue of the science journal, Cell.

Robert Howells, programme director of the Wellcome Trust, the drug company funding the research, called it "a major step forward in our understanding of one of the major diseases of mankind."

There are four types of malaria, but only one is fatal, he said. In this condition, blood cells infected by the malaria parasite stick to the inside of the small blood vessels of organs in the body — particularly the brain, resulting in coma, and in many cases, death.

Normally when an infection occurs, the body's immune system produces antibodies which recognise infected cells and destroy them.

ANSWERS

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Finnish.
2. 20th cent. artist.
3. In front of the Olympic stadium in Helsinki, Finland.
4. Paavo Nurmi (1897-1973). Finnish athlete. Won 6 Olympic titles (1920-1932) in 1,500 metre to 10,000 m. races, and set 20 world records.

★ ★ ★ ★

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

Napoleon Bonaparte

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TONGUE TEASER

TIMOTHY'S TWINS TIN TRINKET IS TINIER

Ten years after the Live Aid concerts rocked to the slogan Feed the World, the funds have run as dry in Ethiopia as the rivers. Vivek Chaudhary sees Tigray's progress in feeding and watering the region of the great famine.



The land that doesn't want to feed its people

MIDNIGHT AT the Debre Dhamo hotel in Makele, Tigray province, northern Ethiopia, and the music from a four-piece band keeps most of the guests awake. In the reception area, temporarily converted into a dance floor, young men guzzle bottles of Bekele beer as they dance to traditional Tigrayan songs commemorating the end of the war, those who died in it and the great famine. By dawn, few revelers have time to nurse hangovers as they join the long processions winding along Makele's main road towards a hill overlooking the town. As the sun emerges through the mist, more than 50,000 people have gathered under a giant monument, completed the night before.

Fifty-one metres high, the monument's four curved pillars support a golden globe. On one side of the monument, statues depict soldiers in the war against the former Ethiopian regime, which ended in 1991. On the other, there are sculpted figures of emaciated people carrying their children and belongings. At the back is a fallen cluster bomb, like those dropped on Tigray during the war against the former Soviet-backed regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The people of Makele had gathered for Martyrs' day, which this year coincided with the inauguration of the memorial, built with local donations, to remember those who died in the war and famine of 1984-85. Ten years ago there was a camp where the memorial now stands. More than 35,000 people walked from all around Tigray in search of food and water as famine spread through northern Ethiopia, killing perhaps one million people.

The world's conscience was kicked into action as it watched television pictures of emaciated humans grovelling in the dirt, looking for nourishment. It was declared a famine of "biblical proportions." As the pictures were beamed worldwide, Bob Geldof decided to turn from pop star to philanthropist. Band Aid was formed and a single was released in December 1984 to raise funds; then, 10 years ago next week, there was Live Aid, a concert at Wembley and Philadelphia watched by an estimated 1.5 billion people in 160 countries. An estimated £70 million was raised, the message was simple — donate and Feed the World.

As water was doused on the Wembley revelers to keep them cool, Gimichael Kidane and his wife Misal

were walking for more than two months in search of that precious resource. I was taken to meet them last month by Heshu, who works for the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Africa's largest indigenous NGO, and was escorting me around Tigray.

Along with hundreds of others, the couple are building an earth dam as part of the REST development programme. Eating injira, a thin pancake-like bread which is their staple diet, they squat on the parched earth telling of the famine as dust blows: "Our children died and so did all our animals — ox, three sheep and two cows. We walked for two months and finally got into Sudan where we were housed and fed in camps," said Gimichael. "I can still feel the pains of hunger and bear my children crying as their bellies swelled up. There was nothing I could do."

When the couple returned to Tigray, they were helped by funds raised by Live Aid and other NGOs, given two oxen, tools, seed and, initially, monthly food rations. Yet a decade after Feed the World, Gimichael and Misal still cannot manage to feed themselves. Said Gimichael: "The food that we grow is only enough

for about nine months; for the rest of our needs we have to work or get food relief. The land is very dry — it does not want to feed its people, I think." The rains are two weeks late and the river beds and wells are as dry as the Live Aid funds, which ran out two years ago.

The farmers whip their oxen to plough the land, stumpling over large lumps of dry earth and rocks. Women squat around wells, their earthen pots at their sides, waiting for the water to arrive. It could take up to six hours. The land looks as if it has been sucked dry.

Most of Live Aid's money went for temporary relief, not long-term development. Aid workers stress that while Live Aid led to a massive increase in donations from individuals and charities and helped publicise a disaster they had struggled to bring to the world's attention, the need to set up long-term development programmes was largely overlooked.

"I got to know Geldof quite well," said Brother Augustus O'Keefe, who has worked in Ethiopia for over 20 years. "I would have liked to see him continue his work in development. All his work was focused on short-term relief and people didn't really understand what was

needed to alleviate the problems."

Live Aid tasted sour to some in Ethiopia. The former regime of Colonel Mengistu was toppled in 1991 with the dictator fleeing into exile. A transitional government is headed by Meles Zenawi, the former leader of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front. Ethiopians are now freer to appraise Live Aid and the famine, which many feel was a political crisis rather than the product of drought.

"What did Live Aid achieve?" asks Heshu. "It saved lives. It was a temporary response to a disastrous situation. But it didn't tell you why there was famine. Drought exists all the time in Ethiopia, but famine is created for other reasons."

Few of the crowd of 72,000 at Wembley were aware that a civil war was raging at the time between government forces and rebel groups led by the TPLF. Most aid was used to help people in government-held areas, while the centre of the famine was in rebel-held areas like Tigray and Eritrea. The regime used the bait of aid to lure people out of rebel-held areas, hoping to undermine support and morale for rebel groups. It then rounded up

thousands of civilians and relocated them. Garrison towns remained well-fed while ordinary Ethiopians starved. Soviet-built MIGs bombed farmers, making ploughing impossible and exacerbating the drought.

Live Aid barely publicised this. Neither did the NGOs, apart from Médecins Sans Frontières, the French medical charity, which was expelled soon afterwards. The thrust of the appeals was that drought was to blame for the famine. Live Aid's director, Kevin Jenden, said at the height of their campaign: "What we've done is make starvation sexy."

Fiona Meehan, who has been working for REST for five years, is scathing about what she calls the "disinformation campaign... Charities and Live Aid argued that if they had gone into the politics then people would not have donated. But Geldof had the ear of a massive young radical audience and I'm sure they would have been able to understand the politics of Ethiopia and still donate."

The country still relies heavily on aid. Around 1 million tonnes of food are required this year, and last year 1.2 million people needed relief assistance in Tigray. The emphasis now,

however, is on development not dependency. Already, splashes of green can be seen in Tigray and other northern areas as REST attempts to resurrect the land. More than 40,000 hectares have been closed off, to allow time to regenerate. Trees are being planted and almost all the areas still farmed have been terraced to prevent erosion. The government also plans a permanent grain stock, to counter future acute food shortages.

REST has also set up 105 mills, and 600 water projects like wells and hand pumps have been completed, a small inroad into a massive problem — 80 per cent of Tigray's population of 5 million lives off the land.

Earth dams are being built and REST has set up 25 centres to distribute aid. It is also attempting to wean people off aid hand-outs by introducing a food for work scheme. Couples like Gimichael and Misal are paid three kilos of grain per day for their work at the dam. The aim is that 80 per cent of all food aid will be used as payment for those taking part in development projects; the rest will be distributed to those who are not fit to work.

Berhae Geheir Ezgiah, the director of

REST, says: "Donations are on the decline. Unless there is a major disaster here no one seems that interested. It is a critical period because either we continue depending on external relief support or we have to help ourselves."

A decade after Live Aid, Ethiopia's reconstruction is as slow as the daily wait for water that Brahan Gmay has to endure every day. She squats beside a well under the shade of an acacia tree near the village of Halla, three bours from Makele. Plastic containers lie at the bottom of the well, which is covered in mud. Brahan went to a camp during the great famine but even today she barely has enough food to eat, walking to a REST distribution centre every month for food aid. It would cost £3,500 to set up a hand pump which would guarantee water.

"Have you ever heard of Live Aid?" I ask her. "No," she replies, "but I know that white people came to help us during the great famine."

"So what are your ambitions for the next 10 years?" "I want clean drinking water near my village and want the harvest to be good so that we can eat well."

The Guardian

South African chiefs to choose paymaster

By Rich Mkhondo
Reuters

GROBLERSDAL, South Africa — For decades Chief Mankorgane Chiloane was on the payroll of South Africa's apartheid government, drawing accusations that he was a stooge and puppet of white masters. He was relieved after last year's democratic elections when a provincial government, legitimate in the eyes of all, took over the payments.

But now President Nelson Mandela has called for the system to be changed so that traditional leaders like Chief Chiloane are paid by the central government instead of the provinces.

"I am confused," said Mr. Chiloane, recognised as chief by 60,000 people in northern province — one of four new regions into which the old province of Transvaal has been split. "I do not want to be accused of being a puppet and stooge once again. I prefer to be paid by my province where my subjects reside, not by someone in Cape Town or Pretoria," he said in an interview.

The remuneration of traditional leaders has become a sensitive topic along with issues like what their role

and powers should be in a Western-style democracy. For many years, kings, chiefs and headmen were paid by the apartheid government, which hoped to buy their political allegiance and their backing for ethnically based homelands.

South Africa has about 3,600 traditional leaders in six of its nine provinces, including Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini, 11 paramount chiefs, 780 lesser chiefs and 2,800 headmen. Altogether they receive pay of about 75 million rand (\$20.5 million) a year from the state.

Now a controversial bill sponsored by Mr. Mandela would have the central government pay them salaries equivalent to those of members of parliament.

"We should put them in the same position as other members of parliament who have uniform salaries who are provided with official residences, who have official transport, who have secretaries, who have drivers," the president said. "If Amakhosi (chiefs) are going to be respected, they must be placed in this position instead of living in houses which leave much to be desired."

Traditional leaders are divided largely along political lines on whether they should be paid by the central or the provincial government.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the majority of tribal chiefs, most of whom support the Inkatha Freedom Party of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Mr. Mandela's longtime rival, want to be paid by the provincial government.

"After having been oppressed for so long by the domination of white governments, Amakhosi do not wish to believe that the first black president of South Africa shall force upon them something that they firmly oppose and reject," the 250 chiefs said in a memorandum to Mr. Mandela.

Mr. Buthelezi and others have called the plan to pay traditional leaders from central government coffers a threat to peace and reconciliation, saying it is an attempt to win the political favour of KwaZulu-Natal's chiefs.

"He who pays the piper calls the tune," said Nyanga Ngubane, leader of the KwaZulu-Natal house of traditional leaders, a body chaired by Mr. Buthelezi.

Businessmen agree on joint projects

(Continued from page 1)

advantage in technology and marketing strategies.

Mr. Zabian stressed that he did not have the slightest fear that Palestinian-Israeli businessmen would become a bridge for Israeli goods to flood the Jordanian market, without a reciprocal flow of

Jordanian goods to Israel. He said that most of the businessmen who had come from Israel were importers, and that there were immediate plans to import Jordanian sweets, other foodstuffs and detergents to Israel, all of which were much cheaper in Jordao.

Mr. Zabian predicted that the products which would find the easiest entry into the Israeli market would be labour-intensive products, which have a distinct price advantage over similar goods produced in Israel as a result of lower labour costs in Jordao.

Serbs step up attacks on Bosnia

(Continued from page 1)

Zepa itself appeared poised to fall to the advancing Bosnian Serbs.

Gen. Janvier's comments drew withering criticism from Bosnia's minister for relations with the United Nations, who said: "That is the only order from Janvier in the last two months that I know."

Referring to a U.N. pull-out from Zepa, he said: "This is something that is impossible and (Janvier) knows it."

Bot U.N. special envoy to the former Yugoslavia Yashir Akashi, speaking in Brussels after briefing NATO ambassadors, said the United Nations had no option but to abandon the enclaves. "It is in no position to physically prevent the fall of these areas or other."

Despite Mr. Akashi's admission of impotence, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali insisted Wednesday the peacekeepers had to stay in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Speaking to reporters after meeting with other senior U.N. officials for crisis talks, Dr. Ghali expressed hope that Friday's meeting in London would provide "new momentum" for a negotiated settlement to the more than three-year-old war.

Meanwhile, Serb forces from Croatia and rebel Muslim forces loyal to renegade Bosnian leader Fikret Abdic launched a fierce coordinated offensive on government positions in the Bihać enclave, U.N. officials said Wednesday.

Lebanese troops crackdown on protesters

(Continued from page 1)

the government headquarters, which was protected by armoured vehicles and dozens of soldiers.

Prevented from staging the scheduled march, Mr. Abu Rizk went ahead with a brief rally in front of some 100 people and surrounded by troops.

Shops across Lebanon kept their shutters down in solidarity with the strike and staff at the national carrier Middle East Airlines held a token one-hour stoppage.

Late Wednesday Interior Minister Michel Murr thanked "the security forces which succeeded in imposing order with the backing of fraternal

Syrian services."

One political analyst said when Mr. Hariri was elected in 1992 "he was welcomed as the saviour the only one capable of steering the reconstruction of the country devastated by the war."

"Today his management has been severely criticised and he is obliged to resort to the stick."

Mubarak warns

(Continued from page 1)

then Mr. Peres before the three leaders came together with advisers. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa was also present.

The deal under negotiation will likely entail a withdrawal of Israeli troops from several Palestinian towns in the West Bank followed by Palestinian elections. Israel's army would remain in charge of security in the rural areas and Jewish settlements but gradually hand over more land over a two-year period.

The deal would constitute the second stage of the Palestinian autonomy outlined in the September 1993 Israel-PLO accord. Gaza and Jericho achieved self-rule in May 1994 in the first stage.

Meanwhile, the PLO police Chief Brigadier General Nasr Yusef has offered Israeli settlers who want to stay in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"There are two solutions, either the evacuation of the settlers in line with the peace agreement that says that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are Palestinian territory, or... the settlers have to become Palestinian citizens," Gen. Yusef said.

"If they want to be Palestinian citizens, I don't think there is going to be any problem whatsoever."

"There are going to be like other Palestinian citizens, without any distinction or any

privilege," he told journalists.

However, there were likely to be few takers among the 5,000 Israelis living under army protection on the Gaza Strip and the 130,000 on the West Bank.

Aharon Dohi, spokesman for the settlers' council, said: "I have a third solution: All the terrorists should clear out. Dr. Nasr Yusef can become an Israeli."

The police chief admitted his men had committed some human rights violations since taking control of the autonomous areas of Gaza and the West Bank enclave of Jericho in May 1994.

He acknowledged that police had early in July forcibly shaved off the beards of three jailed leaders of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas.

"These violations are no more than individual ones. This has nothing to do with institutional violations," Gen. Yusef said. "We do not approve of such behaviour or abuses."

But he refused to say if the guilty officers had been punished. Gen. Yusef said his forces had controlled armed fundamentalists on the Strip and confiscated about 100 weapons since a ban was declared on carrying guns in May.

As many as 600 gun licences had been issued, he added.

Arabs regain oil-market share

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states are gradually regaining their share of the oil market as their main producers expand capacity and other countries rely more on crude imports, official figures showed Wednesday.

The Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), which comprises most oil states in the region, produced 29.7 per cent of the total global crude supplies in 1970 and the level steadily increased to peak at 33.7 per cent in 1979, the Kuwait-based OAPEC said in its monthly bulletin.

Production then began to go down mainly because of a decline in Saudi Arabia's output capacity due to lack of maintenance in its energy sector.

The Arab World production ratio dipped to 32.3 per cent in 1980 and continued to recede to reach a record low of 19.4 per cent in 1985. But it rebounded in the following years to reach 25.8 per cent in 1990 and 27.7 per

cent in 1994, according to the 10-nation OAPEC.

The increase occurred despite a freeze of Iraq's crude supplies due to crippling United Nations embargo imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But experts said this was offset by a sharp rise in Saudi production and rehabilitation of Kuwait's oilfields that were damaged during the invasion.

OAPEC groups Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, with Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The report did not cover Oman and Yemen, which have a combined oil production of around 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd).

World supplies of crude oil and condensates were estimated at nearly 68.2 million bpd in 1994.

Saudi Arabia alone supplied nearly eight million bpd while the two other Gulf oil

giants, Kuwait and the UAE, exported around 4.2 million bpd.

The three Gulf states have a production capacity of more than 14.5 million bpd and they have plans to raise it to above 16.5 million bpd in the year 2005, according to OAPEC and official figures in those countries.

The three Gulf nations along with the other OAPEC members control more than 60 per cent of the world's total crude reserves. At present production levels, the reserves could last around 100 years.

Experts said they expected the Arab oil market share to stabilise in the next few years before it begins to grow after the year 2000.

They noted most of the increase in world crude demand would be met from outside the region, mainly from the North Sea producers Britain and Norway. Both have already provided the bulk of the one million bpd increase in 1994.

Abu Dhabi gas makes inroads in Europe

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Abu Dhabi is making inroads with gas exports to Europe because of the economic slowdown in Japan, its main customer, the Abu Dhabi Gas Liquefaction Co. (ADGAS) has reported.

All ADGAS shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG) has been going to the Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), under a 25-year agreement that took effect in April 1994. The contract includes a build-up period, which allows a progressive increase from 2.4 million tonnes a year delivered in 1993 to 4.9 million a year.

Given Japan's growing demand for energy, it is likely that TEPCO will want even more LNG than it has contracted for.

But for the moment, ADGAS has enough LNG to supply the European market, according to the latest ADGAS newsletter.

It said that ADGAS in the first quarter of 1995 sent three cargoes totalling 180,000 tonnes to Belgium's Distings and Gaz de France.

It has contracted to supply another five cargoes totalling 717,000 tonnes to the Belgian and French companies and a further nine cargoes totalling 280,000 tonnes to ENGAS of Spain between June 1995 and March 1996, the newsletter reported.

The European market has opened up because Algerian gas companies, the main LNG suppliers to Europe, faced extended periods of shutdown for refurbishment, the newsletter said.

ADGAS last year commissioned a third production line that increased its production capacity to 5 million tonnes a year.

Built by Chiyoda of Japan, the new facility is one of the most advanced production trains in the world.

Egypt to cut Suez Canal fees

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Egypt will cut fees levied on vessels passing through the Suez Canal to or from the Jordanian port of Aqaba in a bid to compete with traffic to Israeli ports.

The Suez Canal, which links the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, is the quickest route from Europe to Asia. But Egypt has worried that overland routes from Israel's Mediterranean ports to Aqaba on the Red Sea could compete with Suez traffic.

Revenue from the Suez Canal, as well as tourism and workers' remittances, make up Egypt's main sources of foreign exchange.

Egyptian newspapers Tuesday quoted Mohammad Ezat Adel, head of the Suez Canal Authority, as saying Egypt will offer a 25 per cent discount to all container ships using the canal to or from Aqaba.

An agreement signed Monday with the Jordanian Port Authority also provides for a

35 per cent discount in unloading fees for ships discharging at Aqaba, Mr. Adel said.

Egypt has offered similar reductions in tolls on gas tankers and other vessels passing through the canal from the Gulf. Egypt does not disclose the actual canal fees.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A partner can give you assistance you need this morning, but later personal matters may not go very well for you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Letters this morning can help you to get ahead faster, but steer clear of asking for favours of usually generous allies.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This morning is fine for asking a favour from an admirer but later pals may be too busy and can do nothing for you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A good friend will do something nice for you this morning, but later today worldly affairs are a bore to you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) An out-of-town call from a pal gives you the information you require today, but steer clear of a friend who is apt to criticise.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Listen to what a sensitive friend has to suggest today so that you can improve relations with others.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Seek an expert this morning who can assist you with some financial difficulty which is bothering you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Change your attitude with an ally and you can make the relationship more meaningful later today.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You get fine ideas for handling your tasks more efficiently this morning, but later today carry through with what's been started.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Have a meeting with an associate this morning, and come to a fine understanding. Do not disagree with your loved ones.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Agree with some plan a home use has for improving conditions at your residence today, then be most careful in motion on the highway.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Enjoy some form of entertainment with your partner this morning, but later don't take any risks with your present security.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, JULY 21, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A family discussion can bring fine ideas for your own advancement later today. Be at your charming best.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Know what it is that your partners expect of you today, so listen carefully to their ideas and try to please them.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) New financial arrangements with those with whom you associate with can lead to greater production and benefits accruing.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Go after the entertainment which most pleases you and be happy. Remember what it is which would please your mate.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Have a quiet talk with a family tie about real estate and other holdings and you get the right slant on how best to handle them.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Contact that friend for whom you have much affection and you get the favour you need at this time for an important project.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Show your admiration for a bigwig and you get fine suggestions for your advancement. Be sure of yourself and be happy.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You get new ideas today which can help you to analyse your true position in life and how to better it. Take command of your own life.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You may think your obligations are too much for you to handle today, but if you consult with an expert, they become easy.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are more appreciated today by both associates and friends and they give good ideas how best to advance in life.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Help your loved one to get the house in fine order today and add art pieces to make your home more attractive and charming.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are inspired to gain your aims and can do so with relative ease today, especially if you use your charm.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

Japan tops fortune list of world's biggest firms

NEW YORK (R) — Mitsubishi Corp topped Fortune magazine's revamped list of the world's 500 biggest companies on Tuesday as Japanese trading firms pushed perennial number-one General Motors into fifth place.

Fortune's annual list of the world's top companies was revised this year to include service as well as industrial enterprises, which left car-maker GM trailing not only Mitsubishi, but also Japan's Mitsui Co. Ltd, ITOCHU, and Sumitomo Corp.

The rankings were based on 1994 revenues — expressed in dollars — and the four top Japanese companies all surpassed the \$160 billion mark, with Mitsubishi bringing in \$175.84 billion last year.

The United States with 151 companies and Japan with 149 far made up the bulk of Fortune's international 500. Of the first 30 companies, Japan had 16 and the United States 11.

Germany was the third biggest contributor with 44 companies, including two in the top 30, Daimler-Benz A.G. (20th) and Siemens A.G. (30th).

France was the next with 40 companies, followed by Britain, with 33. The Anglo-Dutch oil company Royal Dutch/Shell group ranked number 10.

Among the very biggest corporations, there were twice as many Japanese firms as American. Of the top 20 companies, 12 were Japanese and six were American.

Ford Motor Co. took seventh place, immediately followed by Exxon Corp. Last year they ranked second and third, respectively, on

Fortune's list of industrial giants.

None of the Japanese firms in the top 10 would have made the list last year as they were considered service companies and were ranked separately.

While Japanese companies dominated the top of the list, they also figured prominently among the money losers as Japan's economy remained deep in the doldrums. Of the 46 firms on the 500 list that lost money last year, half were Japanese. By contrast, only nine U.S. companies lost money.

Fortune's list of industrial giants.

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Fortune's list of industrial giants.

Berlusconi says Saudi deal not yet concluded

MILAN (R) — Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has signed an agreement to sell a 20 per cent stake in his TV empire to a consortium led by Saudi billionaire Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal, Saudi financial sources said.

The sources said on Tuesday that a deal had been signed by negotiators led by Saudi lawyer Mustafa Al Hajjaj.

But Mr. Berlusconi himself said the deal was not yet formally concluded.

"If we had sold, we would have said so immediately and publicly. When it does happen, we will announce it straightaway," Mr. Berlusconi told reporters in Rome.

Germany's Kirch Group, reported to be part of the Saudi-led consortium, also said it was too early to comment on a possible accord with Mr. Berlusconi.

A spokesman for Mr. Berlusconi's holding company, Fininvest, said earlier on Tuesday that negotiations on the sale of a stake of up to 25 per cent in television and advertising arm Mediaset were on the final leg and could be over by Friday.

"We don't know when Berlusconi will sign the final agreement," the spokesman said, adding, "It's just the final decision that is needed but nobody knows when it will be taken. It could be a matter of days or of hours. However, it should be settled by Friday."

If the deal is finalised, it would end weeks of intense speculation over the future of Mr. Berlusconi's stations, which command almost half the Italian television audience.

Mr. Berlusconi, who served as prime minister at the head of a right-wing

administration for seven months in 1994, has come under constant sniping from opponents over a conflict of interest between his political and media ambitions.

The spokesman said a further 20 to 25 per cent of Mediaset could be floated later on the Milan stock exchange.

He said it was not clear how much each foreign investor was negotiating to buy in Mediaset but some Italian newspapers reported that Prince Al Waleed had agreed to buy 10 per cent.

German media magnate Leo Kirch and South African businessman Johann Rupert had agreed to buy five per cent each, the newspapers said. Mr. Kirch and Mr. Rupert are already in partnership with Mr. Berlusconi in a pay television venture called Telepiu.

Mr. Berlusconi has also

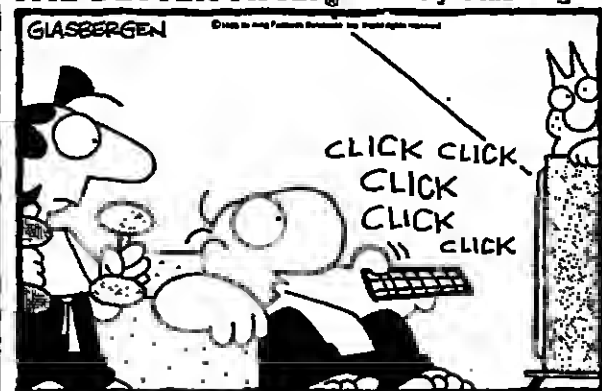
held face-to-face talks with Australian-born media baron Rupert Murdoch, who chairs News Corporation, a combine with worldwide interests in newspapers, films, radio and television. Mr. Murdoch has said he is only interested in Mediaset if he can acquire outright control.

Mr. Berlusconi was anxious to water down his stake in Mediaset in the hope that he could head off his political critics if he chooses to run for office again in the next general election.

But analysts said Mr. Berlusconi was unlikely to settle the controversy over his media interests even if he only retained a minority stake in Mediaset.

"I don't think this is going to solve the problem as far as Berlusconi's opponents are concerned," said a media analyst, who asked not to be named.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SHIWK
YAWNT
DAILNG
DIBORM

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: PAGAN LEGAL RENDER MEADOW
Answer: What the cowboys called their cook — THE LONE RANGER

THE Daily Crossword by Grace C. Pinkston

ACROSS

- 1 Hit musical song
- 2 Small boys
- 3 Greedy ones
- 4 Cures
- 5 Synthetic fiber
- 6 "Garfield" pooch
- 7 "A Chorus Line" hit
- 8 — ammoniac
- 9 Impudent
- 10 Venezuela
- 11 vessel
- 12 Narrow cul
- 13 Existed
- 14 "Fiddler on the Roof" hit
- 15 "The Love"
- 16 Bolter
- 17 CPA word: abbr.
- 18 Commerce
- 19 Bluebonnet
- 20 Farrow of films
- 21 Pastures
- 22 Rabbis
- 23 "A Little Night Music" hit
- 24 Pangolin's tidbit
- 25 Flight maneuver
- 26 Once upon —
- 27 Animal track
- 28 Chum
- 29 "Bye Bye Birdie" hit
- 30 Israel's Abba
- 31 Luscious ones
- 32 Rainbow
- 33 Vendition
- 34 Overwhelmed
- 35 — over (help)

DOWN

- 1 Gullees
- 2 Ottoman Empire chieftain
- 3 Repeat
- 4 Based: abbr.
- 5 "Valse —"
- 6 Connectives
- 7 Stand up to
- 8 Traffic sign, briefly
- 9 Shine
- 10 Tribal deity
- 11 Donate
- 12 Vaticinalor
- 13 County in Iowa
- 14 Seagirt land
- 15 Insect
- 16 Actress Loretta
- 17 Like Solomon
- 18 Moslem scholars
- 19 Prima —
- 20 Quechuan
- 21 Flooded
- 22 Unburdened
- 23 Tropical parrot
- 24 Garnish
- 25 Memoranda
- 26 Bivouac item
- 27 Deserter
- 28 Boutique
- 29 Flaxen cloth
- 30 Diahann
- 31 Carroll's male
- 32 Was impetuous, romantically
- 33 Shuts in
- 34 Australasian parrot
- 35 Mimics
- 36 Brass band instrument
- 37 Roman: abbr.
- 38 GBS name
- 39 Leaf
- 40 —mutual
- 41 Battery additive
- 42 — majestic
- 43 — lovely —
- 44 — lovely —
- 45 In good shape

Friday's Puzzle solved:

O	E	A	F	S	A	I	G	E	A	H	A	N	O
I	N	E	T	R	A	I	M	A	T	E	R		
A	R	I	L	A	R	I	A	U	P	T	O	A	
G	I	L	L	I	G	A	N	S	I	S	L	A	N
S	I	E	R	E	S	D	E	I	E				
S	P	O	T	N	E	R	I	E	D	E			
H	A	R	P	E	R	V	A	L	L	E	P	T	A
A	N	I	E	C	A	S	E	A	N	T	I	O	
W	E	I	E	R	N	E	A	R	C				
C	O	L	D	M	A	N	A	N	O	T	H	E	S
D	O	D	O	S	P	I	O	I	L	I	A	R	
E	L	A	I	T	E	R	E	B	A	R	E		
R	A	I	E	D	S	E	E	R	A	N	T	O	

Kevin Maxwell sought Israeli to save empire

LONDON (AP) — Kevin Maxwell believed a mystery white knight from Israel would save his late father's collapsing publishing empire, a London court has heard.

Mr. Maxwell said his brother Ian was on trial for fraudulent use of employee pension funds to prop up their father's ailing empire.

Mr. Maxwell's holdings were found to be teetering on the verge of bankruptcy following his mysterious death at sea in November 1991.

A Tel Aviv lawyer told London's Old Bailey that, after the elder Maxwell's death, Kevin Maxwell approached him to broker a rescue deal with an unidentified Israeli white knight who would be able to come up with the £400 million (\$640 million) to save the empire.

Yaacov Neeman said he set about negotiating the deal with David Kimche, a former director of Israel's Foreign Ministry, who was acting on behalf of the mystery white knight.

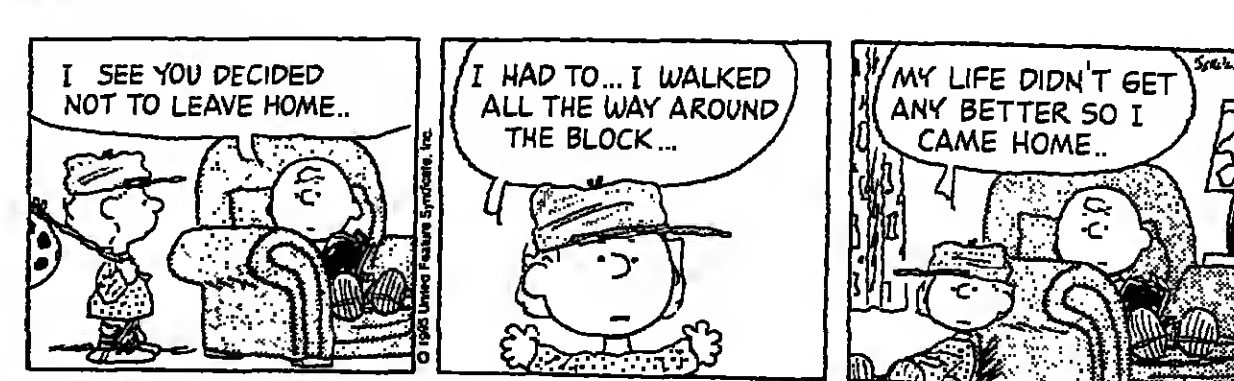
Mr. Neeman did not know the identity of the rescuer, but was "of the opinion he is very serious and absolutely capable of making this size of investment," he told the court.

Mr. Neeman said he was also led to believe by the then-Israeli finance minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, that Israel's government would help out.

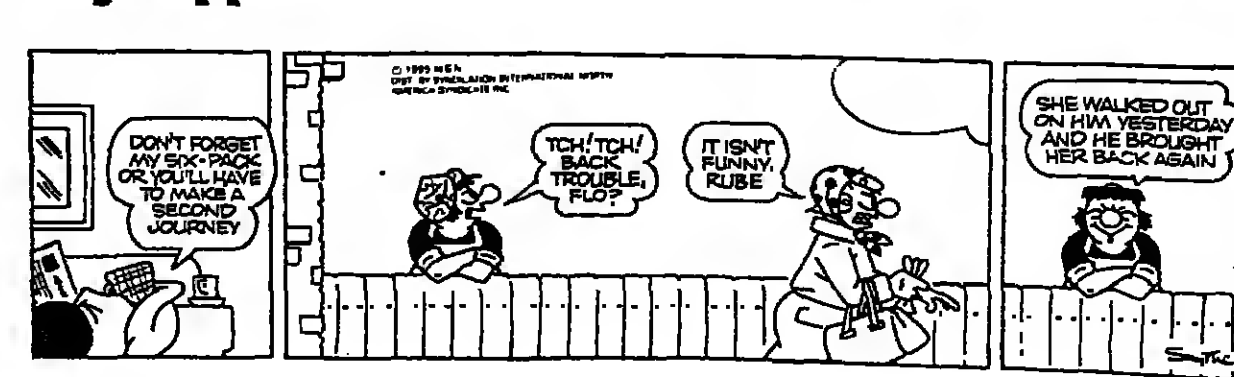
Maxwell had invested considerably in Israel, and was regarded as a hero for brokering an arms deal with his native Czechoslovakia during Israel's 1948 independence war.

Despite a frantic exchange of faxes, Mr. Neeman failed to organise the rescue before a Dec. 2, 1991 deadline, and the Maxwell empire collapsed.

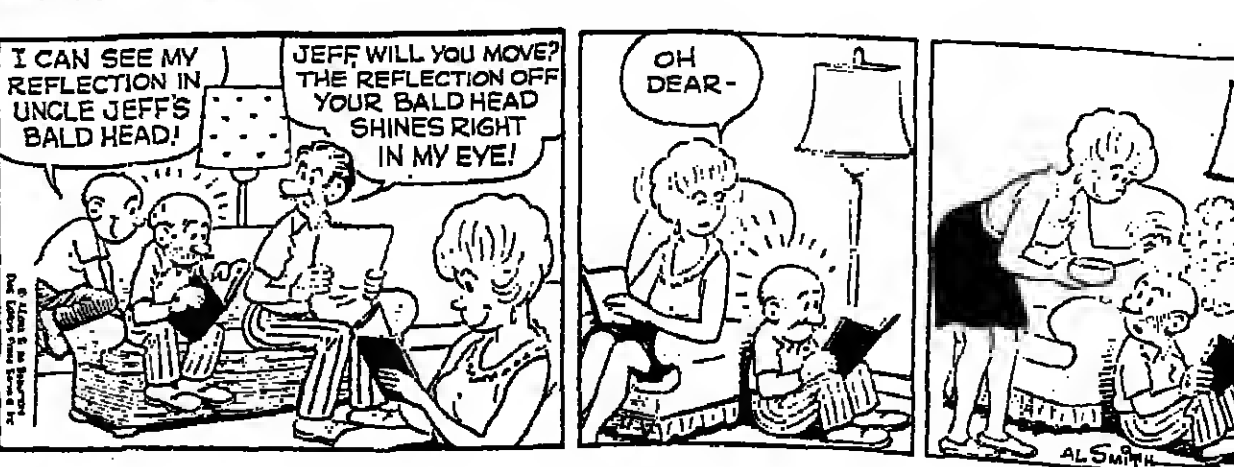
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Ministry reconsidering hotel classification system

Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Khatib said his ministry signed a deal with an international company to reconsider standards for classifying hotels. Mr. Khatib said a new classification system is expected to be ready before the end of the year, noting that the ministry was cooperating with the Jordanian Hotels Society and investors in this regard. He said the new system does not aim to reclassify existing hotels, but is intended mainly to make Jordanian hotels competitive in the region (Al Aswaq).

The Jordan Tourism Investments Company and a local contracting company this week signed an agreement to start implementing the first stage of constructing the Amman Grand Hyatt Hotel in the Jabal Amman area near the Third Circle. The JD 2,165,481 stage, which will be executed within 210 days, entails laying the foundations for the 313-room hotel and constructing two floors. The hotel project will be completed in 1997 (Al Aswaq).

The Amman Chamber of Commerce is about to finish a guidebook on Jordanian industries to be distributed at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit which will be held in Amman in October. The guidebook will be in English (Al Aswaq).

The Ministry of Supply asked the Association of Foodstuff Merchants to reconsider coffee prices in the local market in a manner conforming to the drop in the commodity's prices in international markets. An official source said the ministry was keen to protect the interests of Jordanian consumers and thus was following the issue with the association. The source said the ministry received pledges from merchants to reduce prices within the coming few days. Coffee prices were floated recently after the rise in coffee prices in international markets (Al Dustour).

Yarmouk University will establish a commercial centre at a cost of JD 900,000, University Assistant President for Investment Affairs Saeed Al Bashir said. Mr. Bashir said the centre, which will be established in the western side of the university's campus, will contain 500 stores. He said the project is expected to generate annual profits of about JD 133,000 (Al Dustour).

Royal Jordanian (RJ) will soon decide what type of airliners it will use to transport passengers on short routes operated by it. RJ has over the past period experimented and test fled several small aircraft that would suit its needs for flights to Aqaba, Sharm Al Sheikh, Taha, Alexandria, Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Larnaca. The new turbine-engine, 50-passenger aircraft will be operating from the Marka airport in Amman (Al Rai).

Aid group commits \$200m to help world's poorest

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new international aid group fighting the most extreme poverty in the world said Sunday it will lend \$200 million in small amounts to the poorest inhabitants of developing countries.

"Micro-level credit schemes help people help themselves by starting small-scale income generation projects and businesses," said James Wolfensohn, head of the World Bank, which normally lends only to governments.

"They are an effective way of reaching women, thereby helping to improve the incomes and well-being of their families," Mr. Wolfensohn said.

The Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP), whose founding meeting was held in Washington on June 27, aims to provide credit for the one billion poorest people on the globe. Most live in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, while others are in pockets of extreme poverty in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The demand is enormous — as many as 500 million micro-entrepreneurs want credit, but only a few of them can get it today," said Ismail Serageldin, World Bank vice president who also heads the new group.

The lending group intends to distribute the funds through non-governmental organisations and special "banks for the poor" that have sprung up in several countries. The latter offer a combination of loans, advice and group training to the very poor to begin small-scale businesses.

Many of these tiny enterprises have no collateral to offer and therefore have no access to credit from the formal banking sector. Instead, they rely on the special banks that provide loans ranging from \$30-\$100.

But such banks, the pioneer of which is the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, are usually under-financed and thus limited in their ability to meet demand.

The Grameen Bank extends loans averaging \$100 to landless and illiterate villagers who otherwise could never get credit to build homes, buy cattle or start small businesses with a pushcart or a hand loom. The overwhelming majority of the recipients are women, described by Mr. Serageldin as the "poorest of the poor."

"Experience shows that the payback rate is 98 per cent — better than any commercial bank," he said. "This proves that the very poor are bankable."

But Mr. Serageldin cautioned that the micro-loans can never replace large-scale, government-to-government aid or loans for investment projects given out by the World Bank.

"These two are essential complementary actions — you have a kind of pincer movement on poverty, from the top at the level of national policies and capital investment projects but also from the grassroots," he said.

In other parts of the world, lending institutions for the poor face different problems. In sub-Saharan Africa, the main obstacles are regulatory: Credit unions that are working successfully and mobilising domestic savings are not allowed by law to do many of the things they should, Mr. Serageldin said.

So far, the CGAP has received funds totalling \$200 million from the United States, France, Canada, the Netherlands, the European Commission, various United Nations agencies and the World Bank. At least \$100 million more, and possibly twice as much, is expected to flow in as other countries and financial institutions join the effort.

BAHRAIN (R) — Treasury bills offered by Bahrain in 1994 to finance government spending were heavily oversubscribed by banks operating on the island, the Bahrain Monetary Agency (BMA) has said.

The BMA, Bahrain's Central Bank, said in an annual report that it had issued treasury bills worth \$20 million in 1994 while banks had submitted bids for 1.187 billion dinars (\$3.15 billion).

The BMA offers 10 million dinars (\$26.5 million) worth of 91-day treasury bills every week.

It said the average interest rate on the T-bills during 1994 was 4.75 per cent. The highest rate was 6.38 per cent in December and the lowest was 3.26 per cent in January 1994.

BMA said it offered treasury bills worth five million dinars (\$13.3 million) once a month with a maturity of 182 days. The amount issued was 60 million dinars (\$159 million).

The BMA offers 10 million

Bahrain offered T-bills worth \$520m in 1994

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AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 19/07/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD*	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PSC	500	103500	207.000	207.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3034	137728	4.530	4.520
BANK OF JORDAN	1700	5760	3.400	3.400
THE HOUSING BANK	1650	13200	8.080	8.000
JORDAN KIWAT BANK	3359	9395	2.830	2.800
JORDAN GULF BANK	7000	8143	1.190	1.160
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	3150	11970	3.950	3.800
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	5085	18928	3.730	3.720
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	292	1171	4.070	4.000
BEIT KHALIL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	350	1276	3.670	3.650
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	29357	32446	1.120	1.100
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	330	1730	5.290	5.250
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	5964	5941	1.690	1.670
BANKS SECTOR	61771	231169	INDEX NUMBER: 173.49	CHANGE: -0.20%
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	250	705	2.890	2.820
INSURANCE SECTOR	250	705	INDEX NUMBER: 135.86	CHANGE: 0.00%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	49625	81133	1.650	1.610
JORDAN HILWA MINERAL	250	705	2.950	2.820
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	500	1430	2.860	2.860
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	225	483	2.190	2.130
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	500	595	1.200	1.190
JORDAN PRESS CORPORATION / ALRAI	668	6633	9.900	9.850
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONSUMERS HOTELS	800	1748	2.100	2.180
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	200	657	3.280	3.290
SERVICES SECTOR	52768	93383	INDEX NUMBER: 128.44	CHANGE: -0.59%
ATTACHEE CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	500	60	1.240	1.210
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	2702	9826	3.660	3.640
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	5600	16685	2.980	2.980
THE ARAB POTASH	600	3060	5.100	5.100
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	400	4080	10.200	10.200
JORDAN TANNING	647	5176	8.000	8.000
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	400	1330	3.320	3.320
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	1300	10050	7.750	7.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	2839	13702	4.880	4.800
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	36400	93180	2.600	2.550
THE PUBLIC MILING	100	308	3.180	3.080
DAR AL BANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	950	7410	7.800	7.750
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	7600	5627	7.500	7.400
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	800	4245	5.420	5.300
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11000	5390	4.900	4.900
GENERAL INVESTMENT	3598	3598	2.650	2.600
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	500	1165	2.330	2.330
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	202500	234754	1.120	1.100
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	650	715	1.100	1.100
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & WATER/STEEL	1250	775	6.600	6.620
JORDAN SULFUR-CHEMICALS	250	398	1.570	1.590
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	996	2162	2.190	2.160
KAWTHAR INVESTMENT	1850	2864	1.550	1.550
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES CO.	1600	5040	3.160	3.150
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	9100	19055	2.110	2.090
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	6300	10755	1.780	1.690
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	300444	467597	INDEX NUMBER: 127.28	CHANGE: -0.45%
GRAND TOTAL	415233	793273	INDEX NUMBER: 150.78	CHANGE: -0.31%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET		110117		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET		144326		

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LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	Canadian dollar
1.3612/22	Deutschemarks
1.3848/58	Dutch guilders
1.5518/28	Swiss francs
1.1548/58	Belgian francs
28.48/52	French francs
4.8122/72	Italian lire
1618.0/3.0	Japanese yen
87.50/60	Swedish crowns
7.1575/75	Norwegian crowns
6.1540/90	Danish crowns
5.3905/55	
\$1.5940/50	
One sterling	
One ounce of gold	\$389.15/\$389.65

Women's national basketball team leaves for Japan today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's first women's national basketball team since 1983 Thursday leaves for Japan to take part in the Asian Basketball Championship which will be held in Shizuoka from July 23-31.

The delegation is headed by Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) member Muna Janho and includes players Rana Hussein (team captain), Tala Al Ma'jeh, Subair Makusi, Jehane Abdulnour, Jumana Salu, Hind Al Ghouri, Sirsa Naghaway, Andeera Kasieh, Hala Hubeisen, Raouia Dajani, Tetiana Qardao, and Zein Sha'sha'a.

Jordan will be the only Arab team participating in the 14-team competition. Level A includes China, South Korea, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Taiwan.

Jordan will be playing in Level B with Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The trip to Japan is historic for women players as this is the first national



The Kingdom's women's national basketball team pose for a photo with NBA superstar Hakeem Olajuwon at the Sports Palace during

team to be finally regrouped after a 12-year absence from the basketball scene. It also marks the first time Jordan takes part in the women's cham-

pionship.

The team had a hard time securing funds for their participation since the JBF's budget was spent on

four trips to best prepare the youth Under-18 team who made history of their own by clinching the Asian bronze medal to become the first Jordanian team to

qualify for the World Basketball Championship currently underway in Greece (see separate story).

A fund-raising effort by the women's team fell short of its target as they managed to come up with JD 5,600, and the JBF contributed JD 2,300.

Upon learning that the team was finding it difficult to secure funds for the trip, Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath saved the day by donating JD 5,000 to meet the group's travel costs.

Because of limited funds, the team only had four out of 12 requested matches prior to departure. On a week-long visit to the Kingdom Syrian champions Al Jalal won two matches 62-59 and 69-51 while Jordan won another two 54-37 and 45-37.

The Jordanian team was due to have played another four matches against an Ukrainian team but they were cancelled because of limited funds.

The team will be leaving Thursday evening and are scheduled to arrive in Tokyo July 23.

National Rally to be held Friday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's top rally competitors are gearing up for the start of the season's fourth auto-sport event — the NOKIA National Rally — which will start from the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) at 10:30 a.m. Friday.

The rally will cover a total distance of 240 kilometres of new terrain with six special stages located around the four famous Umayyad desert castles of Al Harrana, Mushatta, Ru'jm Al Shami and Amra.

RACJ has announced that the format of the rally is a trial to see if the stages are suitable for the first leg of the 1996 Jordan International Rally.

The rally will start from RACJ heading towards Mushatta and Ru'jm Al Shami on the way to Azraq 60 kilometres east of Amman. After these two stages the cars will regroup and restart at 1 p.m. towards Harrana and Amra.



Doctor Gerard Porte gives first aid to Italian cyclist Fabio Casartelli who lies unconscious on the ground after crashing in the downhill part of the 15th stage of the Tour de France (AFP photo)

Helmet safety renewed after Casartelli's death

PARIS (AP) — Shocked by the death of a colleague on the Tour de France, riders and officials Wednesday were again debating whether to require helmets that have been shunned as too hot and uncomfortable.

From countries that require wearing the helmets in races — Belgium and the Netherlands — to Italy, home country of the dead rider, debate raged over whether to wear protective headgear.

Like most of his colleagues, 24-year-old Fabio Casartelli was unprotected when he crashed during a downhill run on Tuesday's 15th stage of the summertime race and died after suffering severe head injuries.

"He could have saved his life, using a helmet," said Francesco Moser, retired Italian cycling great. He acknowledged helmets can be troublesome because of heat.

"But I think cyclists should use helmets at least during dangerous descents," he said.

Cycling authorities backed off when riders threatened to strike over a 1991 International Cycling Union ruling that they must wear helmets.

"Riders and team leaders said in 1990 that making helmet mandatory could not be done, 'too hot,' the criticism."

was," Hein Verbruggen, the UCI chairman told the Het Laatste Nieuws newspaper of Brussels.

"In the end we scrapped the measure. But I told the team leaders they were taking a heavy responsibility," the Dutch official said.

Riders complained that hard helmets are heavy and make them sweat, and are uncomfortable on hot mountain climbs.

They protested fines imposed for not wearing helmets in a number of major races such as the Tour de France, Milan-San Remo and Paris-Nice.

"When helmets were made obligatory, they (the riders) came back with the dangers of heat stroke on hot mountain climbs," said cyclist Chris Boardman, who was injured in a fall at the beginning of this year's Tour de France.

"Very few riders consider the plunge down the other side, which is ironic considering that, as we descend at 60mph (100 kph), it's probably the place we need helmets most."

Heinie Kuiper, the assistant manager of the Casartelli's Motorola team argued, that because of the heat Tuesday, "almost none of the riders were wearing helmets."

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ONE FINESSE IS TOO MANY

North-South vulnerable, South deals.		4 ♣ Pass 8 ♠ Pass
NORTH		Pass Pass
♠ A Q 7 4 2	♠ J 8 6 5	Opening lead: Nine of ♠
♥ A Q 5 4	♥ K 8 3	Don't take a crucial finesse until you have to. There might be an alternative line available which offers a better chance.
♦ 8 4	♦ Q 10 3 2	Note that, despite a very strong hand, North did not jump on the first round, but waited until the next. North-South reached an excellent slam that would have been downed had West not found an excellent opening lead.
♣ A 10	♣ 5 2	Without an initial trump salvo, declarer would have been able to ruff two diamonds in dummy, then the bidding.
WEST	EAST	card a heart on the ace of spades and take the heart finesse in an attempt
♠ K 10 8 3	♠ J 8 6 5	
♥ J 9 7	♥ K 8 3	
♦ J 9 8	♦ Q 10 3 2	
♣ 9 8 7	♣ 5 2	
SOUTH		
♠ Void	♠ 10 6 5	
♥ C A K 7 5	♥ A K 7 5	
♦ A K 6 3 2	♦ A K 6 3 2	
♣ 1 2	♣ 1 2	
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass		
2 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass		

to score an overtrick. After the trump lead it might appear that the fate of the contract hinged on the heart finesse, but declarer had other ideas.

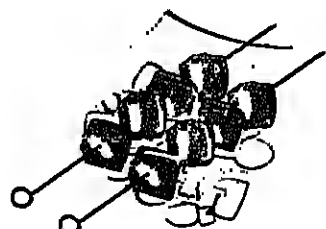
The first trick was won on the table, the ace and king of diamonds were cashed and a diamond was ruffed. Declarer returned to hand with a spade ruff and drew trumps.

With the groundwork completed, declarer led the remaining diamond and, when West showed out, the contract could be claimed.

In with the queen of diamonds, East was snared in a major-suit end-play. Both a spade or a heart return would be into one of dummy's major tenaces, giving South 12 tricks via three tricks in the majors, two diamonds, a diamond ruff and six trump tricks.

What if West won the fourth diamond? That player would have to repulse a major suit and declarer would be back to a finesse for the contract. And if diamonds had not split 4-2, declarer would have had to rely on the heart finesse to get home.

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Jordan's U-18 national team

World Basketball Championship Puerto Rico defeat Jordan

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's Under-18 basketball team suffered their fifth consecutive defeat at the Junior World Basketball Championship late Tuesday evening when they lost 87-68 to Puerto Rico in the 16-team competition currently underway in Athens.

Jordan committed a high number of 25 fouls and were held to low scoring as the Puerto Ricans won the first half with a wide margin 43-25.

The Kingdom's team played a better second half as Zeid Alkhas scored 22, Ma'an Odeh 18, and Ihab Msh 14.

Again Jordan's team had a low free throw percentage with only 9 out of 16 at 56 per cent and only one out of six three-point tries in.

The Kingdom's team is now playing for 9-16th places with South Korea, China, Puerto Rico in one group and Venezuela, Nigeria, Italy and Angola in another.

The Kingdom's team was due to have faced China late Wednesday evening. In earlier matches they lost to Asian champions South Korea, 68-60 and in their preliminary round they finished last in Group C.

after losing to titleholders the U.S. 61-51, Australia 78-35 and Italy 87-64.

The top eight teams in the competition moved into the semifinals and will play for 1-8th places. They are: Lithuania, Argentina, Australia, Spain, Croatia, France, the U.S. and Greece.

Jordan, the third placed finisher in the Asian Championship in March, is representing the continent along with China and S. Korea.

The U-18 team is the first to represent Jordan in a world championship, and only the third Arab country to qualify for the World

Basketball Championship.

Egypt finished last in Sao Paulo in 1979 while Syria came in 12th among 16 in the 1992 championship in Canada.

Jordan's team includes Zeid Alkhas, Ma'an Odeh, Ashraf Samarah, Mahmoud Shaaban, Samer Nino, Ihab Msh, Ramzi Ghneim, Fadi Al Saqqa, Zeid Zu'mot, Raleed Ghoseh, Ziyad Naghoj, and Seif Lada.

The team will return to Amman Sunday after playing another match Saturday to determine their final standing in the championship.

Results of other matches came as follows:

☆ Greece-Lithuania	118-89
☆ U.S.-France	65-62
☆ Venezuela-Nigeria	86-85
☆ Italy-Angola	93-47
☆ China-Korea	73-71

Match statistics

	Jordan	Puerto Rico
Fouls	25	15
Rebounds	30	35
Assists	6	3
Turnovers	25	23
Steals	8	16
Blocks	3	6
Possessions	101	110
Free throws	9/16 (56%)	18/27 (66%)
2-point shots	28/58 (48%)	30/57 (52%)
3-point shots	1/6 (16%)	3/8 (37%)

Tarango loses another stormy match

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeff Tarango, clashing with the umpire and staging a sit-down protest, returned to singles play Tuesday in a match almost as stormy as his debut at Wimbledon.

In a 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 loss to Byron Black in the opening round of the \$675,000 Legg Mason Tennis Classic, Tarango argued with chair umpire Norm Chryst several times and at one point sat down for several seconds to protest his refusal to overrule.

Tarango hanted with spectators during play and once even asked Black whether a fine call was correct.

After the match he was more subdued than angry.

Tarango was fined \$15,500 at Wimbledon and could face further sanctions following an investigation.

Tarango branded chair umpire Bruno Rebeub "corrupt," claiming certain players received preferential treatment from him.

Tarango's wife slapped Rebeub after the match.

His protest Tuesday came when a serve in the 10th game of the second set was ruled long.

"I was disappointed because if it's called in, we're at 5-5 and I'm back in it," said Tarango, who wound up winning the set.

"But I respect Norm (Chryst) and I know he doesn't have it in for me."

Tarango also showed his displeasure at a time violation called by Chryst.

"I think the people who came out here today saw that these sort of close, only one or two points are the difference in most matches these days."

IOC sends out 197 invitations for '96 Games

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — Exactly one year before the opening of the centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, the International Olympic Committee sent out 197 letters Wednesday inviting the world to attend.

In a ceremony at the Olympic museum in Lausanne, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch said, "It has now become a tradition for the IOC to reconfirm the invitation launched at every closing ceremony calling on the youth of the world to assemble in Atlanta."

"We are sure they will present the world with the best Games ever."

The letters of invitations to 197 national Olympic committees were stuffed in five

large bags in the colours of the Olympic rings — blue, black, red, yellow and white.

Among the new invitees were the former Soviet republics, Palestine and Cambodia.

The Atlanta Games will take place from July 19 to Aug. 4, marking the 100th anniversary of the first modern Olympics in Athens, Greece.

Attending the ceremony were Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell and Billy Payne, president of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

Payne assured that athletes and visitors from around the world would receive a warm Atlanta welcome.

"We in Atlanta have been

working tirelessly and we will present to the world the finest sport facilities that exist anywhere," he said. "We are also preparing our community to present a warm southern welcome. We are looking forward more than I could possibly express to share with the world the Olympic Games in just one short year."

Campbell called Wednesday's ceremony an "extraordinary moment" and "yet another milestone" in the city's preparations.

"When Billy Payne dreamed his magnificent dream, no one could have imagined the greatness of the task," Campbell said. "He presented Atlanta with an extraordinary challenge but

also a wonderful opportunity.

"In half a dozen years the city of Atlanta has changed tremendously. We have a new stadium and a magnificent Olympic park, but we have also changed ourselves because in the future we will never more be the same as we have in the past."

Samaranch symbolically signed seven invitations: Greece as the source of the modern Games, the United States as the 1996 host, Spain as host of the 1992 Barcelona Games, Japan as host of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Australia as host of the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, Guinea-Bissau as the most recently recognised national Olympic committee, and Switzerland as host coun-

try of the IOC.

The invitation to the United States was accepted by Anita DeFranz, the U.S. member on the IOC executive board.

The United Parcel Service, an Olympic sponsor, will deliver the invitations. UPS vice president Ed Schroeder said the invitations, for the first time, will be tracked electronically to ensure prompt delivery around the world.

Wednesday's ceremony also included film of the 1990 IOC session in Tokyo when Atlanta was awarded the Games and of the 1992 closing ceremony when the Olympic flag was turned over to then Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson.

Magic Johnson passes on chance to return to NBA

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Magic Johnson has decided to pass on the chance to return to the NBA and the Los Angeles Lakers to concentrate on his business ventures.

The playmaking wizard of pro-basketball's Lakers said Tuesday he can't give the necessary 100 per cent of his energy to returning to the NBA, and he will focus on his expanding movie-theatre and shopping-mall interests.

In a way, it was the third retirement announcement by the three-time MVP, who first retired Nov. 7, 1991 when he said he had become infected with the AIDS virus. After winning a 1992 Olympic gold medal, he rejoined the Lakers before the 1992-93 season, but retired again before it started.

Johnson said two months ago there was a good chance he would make another come back as a player with the team he led to five NBA championships in the 1980s. He made four other NBA finals appearances in his 12 years with the Lakers.

"I was really leaning toward coming back and playing," Johnson said in a statement. "As my business interests continue to increase, I've found that I cannot give

100 per cent to basketball, and if I can't give it my all, it's best I don't return."

Johnson's health is good, and there were no medical questions involved in his decision, said his agent, Lon Rosen.

"He'll continue his basketball career, just not in the NBA," Rosen said. Johnson's All-Star Team will tour Europe and Asia later this year.

Johnson played in five pre-season games before the 1992-93 season. But on Nov. 2, 1992, before the season opener, he retired after suffering a cut during an exhibition game. The cut sparked concern he might spread the AIDS virus to other players.

He also coached the Lakers briefly near the end of a dismal 1993-94 season and found the experience unfulfilling.

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Al Sahaf in 'rare' meeting with Musa Iraq gives U.N. August ultimatum

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Wednesday gave an August ultimatum to the U.N. disarmament commission to complete its work and recommend a lifting of sanctions.

"We can no longer continue working with UNSCOM (U.N. Special Commission) without there being something clear," Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf said on state radio.

The U.N. commission on disarmament Iraq "must finish its mission quickly, at the end of August at the latest, in order to submit its report to the U.N. Security Council so that it lifts the embargo," he added.

President Hussein warned Monday he would stop cooperating with the United Nations unless it lifted the sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

In Cairo, Egypt's foreign minister held a rare meeting with his Iraqi counterpart that may signal greater Egyptian efforts to welcome Iraq back into the Arab fold.

The state-run media did not report Foreign Minister Amr Musa's talks late Tuesday night with Mr. Al Sahaf, and an Egyptian foreign ministry spokeswoman would not confirm the meeting.

But Arab diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the two ministers had "very cordial discussions" that focused on Egyptian-Iraqi ties and Arab relations. Mr. Al Sahaf confirmed the encounter Wednesday, calling it "a meeting between two friends."

The meeting is sensitive because Egypt is reluctant to anger its Gulf allies, namely Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which have vowed not to reconcile with Iraq as long as Saddam Hussein is in power. Egypt's animosity, however, runs less deep. It participated in the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991, but has in recent months spoken of the need to lift U.N. sanctions, including an oil embargo, which has devastated Iraq's economy.

Before Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Iraq and Egypt were allies and trading partners. Tens of thousands of Egyptians still work in Iraq, despite the absence of diplomatic relations.

The meeting comes just two weeks after Gulf states again turned down an Egyptian plan for more financial assistance for Arab countries that took part in the Gulf war coalition.

According to the diplomats, Mr. Musa urged Iraq to try to resolve remaining disagreements with the U.N. Security Council, including the destruction of weapons of mass destruction and claims that hundreds of Kuwaiti prisoners are still held by Iraq.

The diplomats said Mr. Al Sahaf also told Mr. Musa that President Hussein had decided to release 10,000 Egyptians jailed in Iraq on criminal charges as a humanitarian gesture. He asked the Egyptian government to arrange for their return to Egypt.

On Wednesday, Mr. Al Sahaf met Esmat Abdul Meguid, the Arab League secretary-general, for talks on efforts to lift the oil embargo.

The meeting with Mr. Musa is not the first time Egypt has sought to mend relations. Last year, President Hosni Mubarak and Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan, president of the United Arab Emirates, tried to develop an initiative for a reconciliation with Iraq.

But the attempt was blocked by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Since Egypt and Iraq severed relations after the 1990 invasion, officials of the two countries have not met except on the sidelines of international or Arab gatherings.

Mr. Al Sahaf planned to travel Thursday to Qatar, another Arab country that has suggested a reconciliation with Iraq.

Mr. Abdul Meguid details of Baghdad's cooperation with the United Nations and its special commission on Iraqi

disarmament (UNSCOM).

"UNSCOM is in a position that allows it to submit its final report to the Security Council which in turn should follow its commitments to Iraq to lift the embargo" imposed after the 1991 Gulf war to liberate Kuwait, Mr. Sahaf said.

"We asked for the general secretary's support for Iraq in this regard," Mr. Sahaf told the press.

Meanwhile, the son of President Hussein on Wednesday launched a drive to repair tanks, artillery and other military equipment damaged during the 1991 Gulf war and the eight-year war with Iran.

"We don't have to spend one single dollar," Uday Hussein said, adding the campaign would not use up valuable hard currency in a country hit by U.N. economic sanctions since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Damaged parts can be replaced with "what we have in the warehouses," Mr. Hussein Jr. told army technicians during a meeting filmed by state television.

Iraq announced Saturday that it had begun a drive to repair its damaged helicopters. Armoured troop transports and machine guns were also slated for repair in the campaign announced Wednesday.

The London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said Iraq has an army of 382,000 men, 650,000 reservists, along with 20,000 border guards and 4,800 militiamen.

The army has around 2,200 tanks and armoured vehicles, 2,000 troop carriers, 1,500 heavy, long-range artillery pieces, 250 multiple-rocket launchers, and 500 helicopters, including 120 equipped with arms and missiles.

The air force has six bombers, 130 ground-attack planes, 180 fighter jets, as well as air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles.

Most equipment is from Russia, but the Mirage warplanes and Exocets are from France.



GRADUATION: His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday attended the graduation of their Royal Highnesses Princes Hamzah Ibn Al Hussein and Rashed Ibn Al Hussein, who graduated from a parachuting training course, organised by the Special Royal Forces. King Hussein, accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan, watched a parachuting exercise performed by Princes Hamzah and Rashed, in addition to Prince Talal Ibn Muhammad, the King's military secretary. The King also watched free jumping exercises carried out by their Royal Highnesses Princes Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein and Ali Ibn Al Hussein. Also Wednesday the King attends the graduation of a new group of participants in the three week Hussein camps for youth, organized by the Ministry of Youth.

Israeli reserve officers join mutiny call

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Five senior military reserve officers announced Wednesday they would refuse to serve over the army's planned redeployment on the West Bank and urged other soldiers to join them.

The five — one an air force pilot and another an army major — said they would rather go to jail than serve in an army which was preparing to "abandon Judea and Samaria," the Israeli name for the West Bank.

The "Chai ve Kaim"

movement, which organised the press conference, issued a statement saying, "the army has become an instrument of the government which is carrying out a disastrous policy which encourages Palestinian terrorism."

The mutiny call came after 15 far-right rabbis issued a decree last week banning soldiers from taking part in the evacuation of army bases from the West Bank, which they see as part of the so-called "promised land."

They argued such evacua-

tion was against Jewish religious law and raised a storm of protest.

An extreme right-wing soldier was jailed for two weeks earlier this month for refusing to do a period of reserve duty on the West Bank because he feared having to take part in the redeployment.

A military court ruled that he must still do his duty after the spell in prison.

Israeli men spend three years in the military and then

face up to a month a year on reserve duty until they are 50.

About 100 leftists were jailed for refusing to fight in Lebanon between 1982-1985 or in the occupied territories during the uprising which began in 1987.

Israel and the PLO began marathon talks on Sunday to try to reach an agreement by July 25 to extend autonomy across the West Bank, which would involve army redeployment outside areas of Palestinian population.

13 killed, 7 beheaded, in Algeria violence

ALGIERS (R) — Seven Algerians were beheaded in an attack blamed by officials on Muslim militants and six people were killed in other incidents, newspapers said on Wednesday.

The seven, ranging in age from 15 to 52, were beheaded and their bodies were found last Monday near a road in Chattia town in western

Algeria. A young man who had ended his military service and the man's brother were killed on Monday in the same town, the newspaper said.

It also said a booby-trapped van exploded on Monday, killing two people in Bouinan outside Algiers and injuring 18 others.

A closed school nearby was seriously damaged by the bomb hidden inside the van, which was carrying hay, it said.

El Watan noted there had been an upsurge of violence involving Islamic militants since the collapse of efforts by the government to reach an agreement to bring the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) back into the political mainstream.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in the past three years in a bloody conflict pitting Muslim guerrillas against the government.

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Regional tourism experts propose association

AMMAN (AP) — Tourism experts from 10 countries, including Israel, ended two days of talks here on setting up a regional tourism association expected to be announced in October.

David Abramowitz, an adviser to the U.S. State Department, said participants from Asia, the United States, the European Union as well as Arabs and Israelis agreed that the association will enhance tourism cooperation

between regional countries and provide a framework for joint marketing and planning.

Mr. Abramowitz of Washington, D.C., said: "A consensus was reached today on how the association should work. I believe that it will be a landmark in regional cooperation."

He declined to give details on the planned association, but said: "All parties are

convinced that there will be rapid increase in tourism in the region. Regional cooperation will be essential to ensure the sought-for tourist flow."

The Middle East, where the Arab-Israeli conflict has scared off tourists to archaeological and biblical attractions, is expecting a tourism boom once a comprehensive peace settlement is achieved.

Jordan and Israel, which signed a peace treaty Oct. 26, are seeking to encourage regional tourism by setting up joint resorts and providing tourism packages.

Mr. Abramowitz's committee is part of a working group discussing regional development and cooperation within the framework of the multi-lateral phase of U.S.-backed peace negotiations launched in 1991.

Negev bedouins accuse Israel of 'ethnic cleansing'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Three thousand bedouins facing eviction from the Negev desert, officially declared uninhabitable, have accused the Israeli government of "ethnic cleansing."

The Association for Support and Defence of Bedouin Rights issued a statement Wednesday warning that the 200 families from Hawashleh village would fight to stay where they have lived for generations.

Their youth serve in the Israeli army," said associa-

tion chairman Nuri Al Okbi. "They have at least as much rights to a government-supported settlement as do the Jewish new immigrants."

The group demands state recognition of Hawashleh and 14 other bedouin settlements in addition to seven government-sponsored townships built to re-house the Negev bedouins.

Hawashleh covers 100 hectares near Dimona, but the land has been classified offi-

cially "dead" and therefore uninhabited and unutilized.

The bedouins point to the village mosque, grocery shop and charity health clinic, thousands of head of cattle and sheep and fruit and vegetables irrigated by Dams which capture winter flash floods.

In a neighbouring settlement of Abu Ashiba demolition notices have been posted on several buildings, the association said because it

too falls in the areas designated unfit for human habitation.

The association demanded basic services such as water and electricity for the traditional villages and equal rights for bedouins with Jewish citizens of Israel.

A bedouin tribe, the Jahalin, living on the edge of Jerusalem are also fighting eviction from land they moved to in the 1950s but which has now been allotted to an adjacent Jewish settlement on the West Bank.

Sudanese rebels release two U.N. relief workers

NAIROBI (AFP) — The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army (SPLM/A) has released three U.N. relief workers it had held hostage in southern Sudan since June 7, a rebel spokesman said here on Wednesday.

SPLM/A spokesman Stephen Wondu told journalists here that the three — two Sudanese nationals and a South African of Indian origin — were released in the southern Sudanese town of Chukdum at 8:00 a.m. (0500 GMT) on Wednesday and were on their way to the Sudan-Kenya border where they would be received by U.N. representation.

Mr. Wondu said the release came immediately after the SPLM/A had ascertained the release by the Sudanese government on Tuesday of two aid doctors — Italian

Geuseppe Meo and Sudanese Hashim Ziada.

But the SPLM/A has decided to delay the release of two Sudanese government security officers captured until after it had established contact with Mr. Ziada and confirmed that he was truly free, Mr. Wondu said.

Mr. Meo and Mr. Ziada, who worked for an Italian non-governmental aid group called COM, were arrested and detained after a raid by government forces on Pariang in southern Sudan on May 29 and were accused of entering Sudan illegally and helping rebels.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia make progress on territorial waters

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have made progress in their effort to demarcate territorial waters, the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported Wednesday.

KUNA quoted Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah as saying there has been agreement on "specific points" related to the dispute and that "specialists from the two countries will follow up on these points in forthcoming meetings."

He spoke after his return from a brief visit to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday.

Sheikh Sabah did not elaborate of the points of agreement, but said he and Saudi officials had "a common vision" and a sincere

interest in finalising a border demarcation accord.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had demarcated their land boundaries in the so-called natural zone in 1968. They agreed to share oil production in the region.

Poorly defined territorial boundaries are a legacy of colonial days and these have caused several disputes, including Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Nigerian rulers discuss fate of alleged plotters

LAGOS (AFP) — Military governors of Nigeria's 30 states gathered Wednesday in the capital Abuja for talks with the military ruler, General Sani Abacha, presumably on the fate of 25 alleged coup plotters believed to have been sentenced to death or life in prison.

Officials in Abuja confirmed the meeting was taking place but said nothing of the topic of the meeting.

The meeting was separate from another of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC), the ruling military junta, which is expected to convene this week in order to review the sentences imposed on 43 alleged coup plotters.

Press reports said retired general Olusegun Obasanjo was sentenced to life in prison, along with 10 others. Gen. Pbasanjo is the only military ruler in Nigeria's 35 years of independence to have organised elections and turned over power, in 1979, to a civilian government.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, a retired general who had been Gen. Obasanjo's vice president, was reported to have been sentenced to die, along with 13 other military officers. Gen. Yar'Adua is from the north. Gen. Obasanjo from the south, and both are highly respected figures in Nigeria.

The remaining 18 have been handed lesser sentences, and three were judged in absentia, according to the press reports.

In Lagos, Gen. Yar'Adua's wife, Binta Shehu Yar'Adua, broke her previous silence and proclaimed her husband's innocence Wednesday

in a statement splashed across the front pages of four newspapers.

She said she had not spoken previously because: "I have always believed that the creator in his own way will always defend the defenceless, but one task which history and my conscience have placed on my shoulders is the burden of speaking out before an innocent man, my husband, is wrongly condemned and an unjust sentence executed on him."

"Nigerians can testify that General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua is a quiet, taciturn man who is passionate about democratic conduct and practice," she said. "In and out of office he has always played by the rules."

"As the members of the Provisional Ruling Council sit to take a look at the report" of the military court, "I appeal to their honour and sense of justice to do that which is right."

Also in Lagos, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), Nigeria's highest Islamic authority, joined other local and international groups pleading for clemency.

In a statement, also published in the local press Wednesday, the SCIA urged Gen. Abacha, a Muslim, to be "kind, just as Allah has been kind to you."

It urged Gen. Abacha and the junta to "show mercy and clemency to the military officers and civilians" convicted of the failed coup.

The SCIA appeal joined others already made by other local and international groups and countries such as the United Nations, the

Commonwealth and the governments of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Switzerland and the Vatican.

The president of the SCIA is Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, the powerful Sultan of Sokoto who is the senior northern Nigeria traditional chieftain and whose son, Sambo, was one of three persons sentenced in absentia over the alleged coup plot.

Meanwhile, eight Supreme Court judges in Abuja have decided to withdraw from participating in the treason trial of Chief Moshood Abiola to remove any risk of bias on their part, press reports said here Wednesday.

Mr. Abiola's lawyers had earlier challenged the competence of the judges to hear his case since all jurists are involved in another suit with National Concord newspaper, owned by the detained politician.

At a sitting Tuesday convened to fulfil a promise made by the court may 16 to explain why they decided to stay out of Mr. Abiola's treason trial, the judges announced that a new panel would be set up to hear the case, the reports said.

His wife Kudiratu Abiola, who attended the Supreme Court sitting, was quoted as saying by the independent A.M. newspaper that the federal government has planned to impose a death sentence on her husband.

"They planned to sentence him to death so that the whole world would begin to appeal to them for clemency," she was quoted as saying at the end of the court sitting.

Internet users vote 'no' to nuclear testing

PARIS (AFP) — Users of the worldwide electronic highway known as the Internet can now vote in an ongoing straw poll on France's nuclear testing policy. The answer to date is a responding "no" to new tests.

The results as of Wednesday showed approximately 95 per cent of respondents against France's resumption

of testing, scheduled for September, with only five per cent in favour.

The poll, launched July 3 by a company called Cyberpages International, and due to run to the end of the year, is being actively promoted by the Australian newspaper The Age, among other publications.

Readers of The Age's Internet edition, to be found on

the user-friendly network known as the World Wide Web, are directed to the electronic equivalent of a multiple-choice form, where they are asked "do you support the resumption of nuclear testing by France in the South Seas?"

They then click on either "yes" or "no" — there is no provision for waverers — and can also indicate their country or region of origin.



U.S. House votes to close arts agency

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. House of Representatives voted to end federal funding for the arts in 1998 as part of the bill cutting next year's government spending on National Parks and Natural Resources. The National Endowment for the Arts Funding is part of a \$12 billion bill for the Interior Department and other agencies.

The total is \$1.5 billion less than last year's budget and \$1.8 billion less than President Bill Clinton requested. The house approved the appropriations on a vote of 244 to 181, but Mr. Clinton's top aides have said it could be vetoed if not changed by the senate. The administration supports arts funding and would like to see more funds for national parks and resources. The arts endowment, under attack by conservatives for grants made to artists and performers who present sexually explicit subject matter, would see its budget cut by 40 per cent to \$99.4 million in 1996 and 1997.

Pilot blamed for Prince Charles plane crash

LONDON (R) — The pilot of a royal aircraft should have taken the controls from Prince Charles before it landed on a Scottish island and slewed across a runway crashing to a halt, the Daily Mail said Wednesday. An official report exonerates the heir to the throne but says Squadron Leader Graham Laurie should have taken the controls from Prince Charles, an experienced pilot, when the aircraft landed in high winds on the Isle of Islay in June last year. There were 11 people aboard. No-one was injured. The report, which the Mail said is to be released in parliament Wednesday, said the pilot should not have let the prince land the BAE 146 in such weather and the plane's safety is the pilot's responsibility even if he is not flying it. Three tyres burst when Prince Charles sent the aircraft off the runway causing about £1 million (\$1.60 million) worth of damage, said the Mail in its front page story which added Prince Charles had grounded himself since the accident.

Aristide unveils plans for new voodoo temple

PORT-AU-PRINCE (AFP) — President Jean-Bertrand Aristide unveiled plans for a new voodoo temple in Haiti, answering calls for justice by the ancient religion's followers who claim their beliefs have been shunned. Hundreds of voodoo houngans (priests) along with believers applauded after Mr. Aristide, a former Roman Catholic priest, announced at the national palace that the new temple would be built. Plans for the religious centre followed complaints by voodoo believers that they had been humiliated at Roman Catholic and Protestant ceremonies such as baptisms and funerals.

Cancerous lesion removed from Reagan's neck

LOS ANGELES (R) — A cancerous skin lesion resulting from excessive sun exposure was removed from former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's neck during a routine physical examination this week, a Reagan spokeswoman said Tuesday. She described the lesion as a "small localized basal cell carcinoma" similar to one he had removed from his nose several years ago. "It was totally excised and doctors tell me the chance of recurrence is very small," Ms. Drake said. Mr. Reagan, 84, who last November was diagnosed with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, was otherwise found to be in good health, according to a statement issued by his office. Mr. Reagan's wife, Nancy, was found to be in excellent health when they underwent their annual physical examinations on Monday and Tuesday. Mr. Reagan has made few public appearances since being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, a degenerative disease affecting the mind.

12 police wounded in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (R) — Twelve policemen were wounded on Friday when a hand grenade was thrown at a police station in the city. The police spokesman said the grenade was thrown from a balcony of a building in the city. The police station was not damaged. There were no casualties. The police are investigating the attack. The police station was not damaged. There were no casualties. The police are investigating the attack.

SPLA releases hostages

SHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has released two of its five captives, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry said Friday. The two captives were released from a government security force camp. The SPLA said the captives were released from a government security force camp. The SPLA said the captives were released from a government security force camp.

Chirac arrives Ivory Coast

YAMOUSSOUKRO, Ivory Coast (AFP) — French President Jacques Chirac arrived in Yamoussoukro on Friday for a two-day trip to Africa. Chirac is on the second leg of a five-day trip to Africa. He is accompanied by his wife, Bernadette Chirac. Chirac is on the second leg of a five-day trip to Africa. He is accompanied by his wife, Bernadette Chirac. Chirac is on the second leg of a five-day trip to Africa. He is accompanied by his wife, Bernadette Chirac.

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